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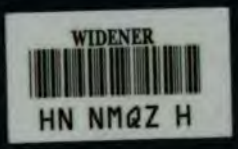
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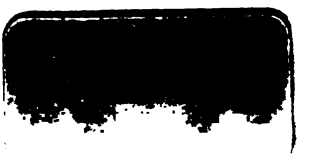

MOTIVES OF MANKIND.

MOTIVES
OF
MANKIND

A STUDY OF HUMAN
EVOLUTIONARY FORCES.

BY

F. U. LAYCOCK, LL.B.

Author of "Economics and Socialism," "Political Economy in a Nutshell," etc.

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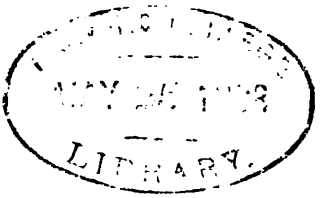

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TO MY FRIEND,

REV. E. LLOYD JONES,

WHOSE MIND IS BROAD ENOUGH TO APPRECIATE,
WHOSE HEART IS KIND ENOUGH TO CONDONE,
WHILE HE IS UNDER NO OBLIGATION TO APPROVE.

CONTENTS.

PAGE.

PART I.

PRIMARY NEEDS AND MOTIVES.

Chap. I.—Economic Man 1
,, II.—Man's Relation To Land .. 21

PART II.

RACE INFLUENCES, SOCIETY'S BURDENS, AND ALTRUISTIC MOTIVES.

Chap. III.—The Individual and Society.. 57
,, IV.—Power and Load 81
,, V.—Increase of Efficiency.. .. 103
,, VI.—Towards the Highest.. .. 129
,, VII.—The Strength of Freedom .. 171

PART III.

SOCIAL EVILS VIEWED AS FETTERS.

Chap. VIII.—Economic Liberty 214
,, IX.—Labour Forced and Restricted 243
,, X.—First Principles 283

PART IV.

SOCIAL EVILS VIEWED AS EXTRACTIONS.

Chap. XI.—"Alchemies" 316
,, XII.—Priestcraft and Exploitation 355

SYNOPSIS.

Chapter I. ***Economic Man.***—Social institutions are the result of slow growth. The natural tendencies we call economic laws are substantially changeless. Difference between human and natural laws is important but too much disregarded. Human need for material subsistence is the motive of economic activity, and the occasion of much tragedy. Adam Smith should have commenced with this need instead of the labour used to supply it. All conduct is traceable to motives and desires; and each seeks to accomplish his desires in the easiest manner known to him.

Chapter II. ***Man's Relation to Land.***—We thus get the economic law of rent. Land is essential to production of subsistence but is of unequal value. Some land is as profitable at a rent as other land rent free. This surplus value is vitally distinguishable from the value added by human effort. To tax the natural surplus value for common purposes cannot deter effort; it will the rather discourage idleness; but to tax the result of labour will diminish the endeavour. The margin of cultivation is a formula indicating what land is for the time being worth using. The so-called law of diminishing returns may well be disregarded in face of the progress of human knowledge and skill. Freedom to seek the greatest advantage from the smallest expenditure results in increased return through change of kind and improvement of method without lowering the margin of cultivation. Demand may be enlarged without increase of population: the growth in variety indicating progress. The one condition of this increase in demand is freedom to produce the supply.

Chapter III. ***The Individual and Society.***—Lower forms of life afford no analogy for safe inference of human motives. Social efficiency at the expense of individual efficiency or development has always resulted in national ruin. Self-repression *per se* has never made for progress. Burden of society on individual is not an aid to social evolution.

Chapter IV. ***Power and Load.***—Human communion furnishes motives. But motive power and load (or burden) are distinguishable opposites. Increasing the burden of society is hindering the race. Some human motives are independent of society, *i.e.* (1) need of bodily sustenance; (2) marriage and offspring. Society, or the community, usually means government and its dependents. Its effect on human motives has reflex influence on parental stock; its constitution, operation, succession and conditions. Adverse conditions do not aid evolution. Development arises from surplus vitality with sufficient provision.

Chapter V. ***Increase of Efficiency.***—Parentage of fittest being desirable the conditions of society should not deter their marriage. Standard of subsistence cannot raise wages. But, influencing different minds in different degrees, conditions adverse to enterprise may discourage marriage of racially superior without affecting reproduction of inferior. The latter must also, as a result, suffer for want of industrial commanders. This is explanation of degeneration: also of diminishing middle classes. Restricting the stronger means crushing the weaker. Humanitarian regard for greater number has been perverted by attempt to fetter the stronger minority. These naturally and inevitably throw off the burden for which they have no motive, and the majority suffer the more. Progress demands that the burden be taken up freely not by compulsion.

Chapter VI. ***Towards the Highest.***—The so-called struggle for existence is the life itself. It involves desire for life and gives pleasure. Religion is highest life, but its benefit depends on guidance of reason. Christianity never favoured repression of individual. Self-sacrifice of martyrs was highest self-assertion. Life to be joyful must be free. Men and beasts undertake apparent burdens for the pleasure they bring. Altruism begins with justice, but is essentially personal. From self the regard passes to family and nation, but altruism is beyond even that, and emphatically differentiates its object. It is not religion. That is conception of unseen: a motive to all good if guided by reason, but not otherwise. It absolutely cannot be forced.

Chapter VII. ***The Strength of Freedom.***—Progress is attainable only by liberty: not by attempting to intensify struggle. We should seek conditions free and favourable. Nature alone can increase the life and thus intensify the effort which favours evolution. Exactly the same consideration applies to economic factors. Smith and Darwin both assumed life and did not sufficiently state the assumption. Its tendency to increase in quantity and variety with favourable conditions indicates mischief of contrivances to intensify the struggle or manipulate distribution and prices. Normal life affords pleasure. Increase of life assumes and results in differentiation. This is evolution and is not derogatory if duties correspond with fitness. All depends on method of selection and consideration of motive. Freedom, here again, produces efficiency. The Russo-Japanese war is an instance of operation of this motive. At the back of it all is tendency to increased life from more free conditions. Human progress negatives the supposed antagonism of the individual to society. Government calling itself society is often antagonistic to the individual and the race. Reason and religion are not antagonistic. The antagonism arises from authority under various guises opposing reason. Life and liberty have always been with reason. Liberty fosters life, and life physical, mental, spiritual, if intense enough, will have liberty. But both must be on Nature's plan and not by quack artificialities.

Chapter VIII. ***Economic Liberty.***—We must begin therefore with labour (conditioned by knowledge and skill) working on land with the aid of tools or capital. But first we must be rid of confusion of terms. Labour with a capital L does not mean either labour or labourers. There is still worse confusion concerning Capital. Realising the relationships between the three elements of production (1) natural objects and forces, (2) human effort, and (3) natural objects fitted for use in aid of production, we observe concerning human effort that it has three possible conditions. The effort may be (1) free, (2) more or less compulsory, or (3) restricted by law or combination. Free labour is that which affords the best reward for the labourer.

Chapter IX. ***Labour Forced and Restricted.***—(*a*) The hut or poll tax is a means of forcing the labour of the natives of certain conquered countries. (*b*) Labour is restricted by (1) taxes on trade and on the occupation of land, works or houses, or otherwise assessed on the result of human effort; (2) untaxed monopoly of land; (3) public debt and unscientific currency; (4) mutual compact or virtual compulsion to refrain from working in order to maintain certain prices or terms of employment. The peacefulness of the persuasion is illusory. Freedom to work, not to stop work, should be the ideal. Combination to bargain collectively is contrary to all principles of free trade.

Chapter X. *First Principles.*—Production of desirable sustenance cannot be harmful. Hence restriction against working, whatever the price, is unwarrantable interference with liberty. Demand is determinant of price. To work at that price induces supply in exchange which is coincident with effective demand. Refusing to work is, therefore, bad even for competitor, in that it kills demand. It is not production but hindrance which does the injury, and restrictions against underselling are in effect directed against unemployed. Increasing demand artificially is equivalent to checking supply: both tend to famine. Demand for commodities is not necessarily supply of subsistence. The latter is the essential object and inevitably affords demand. The effect of this principle on public questions is of more importance than the mere theory as affecting private conduct.

Chapter XI. *Alchemies.*—Contrasts of condition impugned by economist and historian have their effect on *personnel* of the race. The poverty which ought to be gone still remains with us, and the errors which cause it change form but remain in substance. Modern social policy has, and seeks, no defence in principles. Nothing desirable can be gained from diminishing production, and old dread of over-production has only taken new form in artificial stimulation of spending. Poverty arises from restriction, not competition. Land monopoly is only one cause of poverty. Other restrictions act similarly. Abundance benefits all, but chiefly the poorer producers. Alchemy of rent divorces labourer from work, and so with other alchemies. Government in various aspects is one such alchemy as now conducted. Increase of its sphere extracts more and more. Protection and public debt are definitely injurious. Projects of reform like housing, education, pensions need close scrutiny, Bargainer-general acts as restriction. Other problems, so-called, are included in that of poverty. Solution is more free and abundant production.

Chapter XII. Priestcraft and Exploitation.—Discovery of identity in diversity involves definite separation of acceptable from unacceptable; distinction between desirable and undesirable. Burden of society on individual is evil because it operates, in direction, contrary to progressive motives. But direction and control are essential to work, and therefore to progress. Knowledge and application of force are essential. Government production saves no cost of supervision. Abuse of power by (1) physical force, and (2) operation on human minds characterise distinct classes. Greatest danger is from latter class when high state of civilisation is reached. In wide but essential sense it is priestcraft. Separation of class of wage-supervisors or bargainers-general is such a priestcraft. It is unnecessary, lowering, palpably mischievous ignorant as creed and degrading as ethics. Offered as social reform it is not only a positive injury in itself, but also a maintainer of other evils, *e.g.*, land monopoly and public debt. It supports doctrines kindred to itself which stand athwart removal of these evils. Employer is natural leader, but has been thrust aside for members of this priesthood. Evil is palpable, but incalculable. Captains of industry should become leaders of reform in land questions and public debt. Man must be free to increase surplus which is the only hope of diminishing poverty. Highest motives of mankind urge to this emancipation.

PART I.

PRIMARY NEEDS AND MOTIVES.

CHAPTER I.

Economic Man.

NATIONAL institutions and social organisation are always the result of growth. Life and time have been as necessary to their present existence as to that of a coral island. They are built on a solid past submerged centuries ago. Through successive generations, while the past has been receding from our view, they have come up to the time and condition in which we now see them. Nowhere in the whole aspect of a nation is this more palpably true than in the case of its land laws. No phenomenon of the relation of human beings to each other can be fully understood without reference to antecedent circumstances. Indeed, the individual himself in body and mind is modified by the land laws and social institutions under

which he and his ancestors have lived. The conditions determining his relation to the earth he inhabits and the persons by whom he is surrounded have been evolved from previous conditions. Nor is it easy to estimate accurately all the forces by which the social state of the past has been slowly moulded into that of the present.

But economic laws are more nearly eternal, and infinitely more changeless than the land laws of the oldest nation on earth, or the most long-continuing human institution. And when we go back to find among barbarian ancestors, or foreign conquerors from distant lands, the roots of an institution or law adopted by dynasty after dynasty with this or that modification, and surviving conquest after conquest, revolution and upheaval, let us remember that it is still but an ephemeral display of more deeply written laws of human nature itself as presented in that particular district and stock of humanity. Man's antiquity is undoubtedly greater beyond description than the most learned would have believed a century ago. But the creature is nevertheless a recent introduction into the fauna

of the planet. And the laws with which the economist has to deal have their roots in a time beyond that of man's ape-like ancestor. Yet these are the laws which some social reformers would essay to destroy or uproot by acts of a legislature which is in comparison the gnat of an hour's sunshine. Nay, they scarcely deign to notice these laws of man's very being in their haste to be making some laws of their own devising, by which they are satisfied they can control his every doing.

Let it not be concluded that long existent domination is to be regarded as itself a reason for unquestioning obedience. That would be conservatism of the blindest sort. Though the votaries of such a creed should at least take the trouble to ascertain the age of their cherished idol and not offer their allegiance to an evil thing of yesterday thinking it is an elder of all the ages. But without attaching excessive virtue to mere age it is important to consider what is a permanent characteristic of the human race, and what is only a passing phase of human development. For a ruling power may be maintaining at great pain and sacrifice, as though it were essential to the national

existence, what is only a temporary excrescence, impossible to continue permanently, and inevitably reducing the nation's strength while it does continue.

If, however, we are to understand human conduct and motives, if we are to appreciate social institutions at their true worth, we must obtain a clear grasp of the nature and relationship of the two sorts of laws we have had to mention. It is unfortunate that they are described by the same word. They are not at all the same thing. And the use of the same word tends to confusion. Much angry scorn has been poured out concerning man-made laws when the reference was to laws of the sort with the making of which man has had least to do. It is no matter for surprise that the laws of the particular nation or state should be better understood than those general truths which scientists call laws. Art belongs to an earlier age than science. Human beings understand better the laws they have themselves made than those they have only discovered or enunciated. And this is the relationship of the two sorts of laws. Those which the word most easily represents to the mind are

the laws made and recognised by the sovereign power in the state as binding on all the people. The punishment of disobedience to such laws is found in the penalties prescribed by statute book or common law. The motive for obedience to them is the escape from such penalties. The force and obligation of such laws comes from the outside of the person whose obedience they demand. These are the laws of the lawyer too numerous to be mentioned. The other sort are not laws in this sense at all. These laws of the lawyer say what a man must do. The others say what he probably will do. Such are the laws of supply and demand. And he sometimes will do what he must not do. For instance, the laws may say that he must not buy certain objects outside the country in which he lives for importation into that country without paying a tax. The laws of supply and demand say that the probability is he will buy where the objects are cheapest, if he is allowed to do so, and that without paying any tax. Occasionally the tendency to buy in the cheapest market and pay no taxes save what one must results in smuggling. That is a simple case of

conflict between two laws, one of each kind. Instances might be multiplied indefinitely.

Frequently the resulting tendency of the conflict of human-made laws with those general truths which scientists call laws of Nature is difficult to forecast. It may be the human-made law will be broken, or it may be its effect will be found to be different from what was intended, the reason being that a natural law was not allowed for. These laws of Nature have to be learnt. They cannot be made by Parliament and rulers. It ought to be the business of law makers to learn the laws of Nature of which the operation will affect or be affected by the laws they make. Their not doing so largely accounts for the evil effects of the laws they establish.

Yet economists have not insisted as clearly as they ought on the deeper truths relating to the *genus homo* when they have discussed the dealings of economic man. Hence it has happened that later economists have themselves thrown doubt on the very existence of the economic man, who is, nevertheless, an older entity than historic man or even than prehistoric

man; for he was in essence the same before he became man at all. His distinguishing features are that he must eat and drink (a characteristic which he shares with the animals lower in the scale of life), and has other unmistakable cognate wants demanding a material provision for their supply.

There is, it is true, another side to him in his capacity for increasing Nature's provision. In this he stands immeasurably above the brutes. There is a gulf between them and him which they have no prospect of passing. This side is of comparatively recent growth. He has, moreover, need of, or desire for, clothing and other comforts, in respect of which his wants far transcend those of lower creatures, and he is, therefore, less independent than they. The fur and feathers with which they are protected and adorned are their unconscious growth. Their conscious efforts to build themselves homes and provide ambushes are interesting but comparatively very simple. Yet the ampler embellishments of man's life are obvious developments in the course of time from the fundamental beginnings which he shares in essence with the birds

and beasts. His animal wants stand very much at the foundation of his being. And lofty as the superstructure may be, if the foundation lacks stability or loses its support the whole is endangered.

Moreover, it must be noted when considering his power to increase the requisite supply that the wants and needs which create the demand stand first. They were first. They remain first. They always will be first. King, bishop, duke, lords and ladies, all began their life with a very plebeian hankering after food. This is the motive power which carries forward much of the work humanity performs. The feeding, clothing, and housing of the race stand for more than is generally understood. In truth, only after it is provided for can anything else find any considerable attention.

Said a nobleman to a strange boy he found working in his grounds: "What do they give you for your work?" "Meat, clothes, and lodgings," replied the lad. "Well," mused the master, "I don't know that even I get more." True, much depends on the kind and quality; much on the reliability of the provision. Some are overworked and underfed. Others are

overfed and underworked. But food is essential to all, and there is a limit to any one's consuming powers. Extraneous accompaniments have to be resorted to if the desire is to enlarge expense, while Herr Teufelsdroch has reminded us in his philosophy of clothes, that dignities and authority, wealth and honour, are in some sense little more than questions of apparel. There is much wasteful lodgment of persons not invariably deserving, whilst there are others not altogether undeserving who find no shelter at all. But under all the variations the primary needs continue while life lasts. These needs are at the base, first, middle and last.

In their widest sense they are the motive of all economic action. Only error and mischief can result from neglecting to keep these motives ever in the mind of the economist, the statesman and the legislator.

They are the cause and groundwork of numberless tragedies. In recent years it has been difficult to find a newspaper which did not contain some account of death from absolute starvation; or of murder or suicide as the result of difficulty of providing for these needs. Perhaps

the most pathetic that lingers in one's memory is the case of an old man and woman who had struggled through constant disappointment to find the occupation necessary to earn enough for their modest requirements until at last they decided to take poison together. The old man died, but the old woman recovered, thus enabling her to be sentenced for the murder of her husband. She was not hanged; but the case was a little curious. We might call it peculiarly sad were it not for the hundreds of others that have regularly come to light, not less sad in their own way.

Possibly the grimmest jest of them all was the case of an ex-soldier who had been wounded in the war, and was consequently at a disadvantage in seeking work. He had to face a condition of the labour market, which owing to our culpable ignorance of economics was overstocked with labour. His wife was dead, but he had two or three children. He committed suicide, the immediate cause being a magistrate's summons to enforce payment of his rates. The case is interesting as showing how the community rewards the victims of its own folly. But it should

have been mentioned after the discussion of the following chapters. The community's folly must be proved, not merely asserted. Our present point is a discussion of man's primary needs, for the maintenance of his life and the support of his physical strength.

Men do not work to produce save that they may enjoy. Their labour is performed in order that they or others towards whom they have goodwill may eat and drink, be clothed and comforted.

And if Adam Smith, instead of beginning with a statement supporting the view that labour is the creator of all wealth, had begun somewhat further back and had said with realisation that human need for subsistence was that which created the necessity and demand for such wealth, he would have avoided several errors of his own, and many misunderstandings of his words by which others have fallen into more grievous errors. Nothing can be wealth which lacks suitability to minister to human needs or desires. And the value of labour is limited to its utility towards this end. It is to this test that every object must be brought for the ascertainment of its value. It would have

been well for unnumbered thousands if this had been plainly stated and constantly brought to mind. That it was assumed and not altogether forgotten must be conceded. The pity is that it did not become a clearly established explanation for generations after political economy was regarded as a science. And the doctrine (which was suggested by W. Stanley Jevons, and is not at present denied) still awaits full comprehension.

Yet neither Adam Smith nor any of his reasonable followers was ever guilty of anything so jejune as to justify the criticism which recently appeared in a leading financial weekly newspaper. In a series of articles designed to show forth the discrepancy between "Economic Theory and Experience," it was contended that the orthodox economists had set the love of gain as the leading motive of human actions. And so little did the writer of these articles realise true proportions that, having set up a theory of his own invention as a lay figure to be metaphorically slain, he proceeded complacently to demolish it by the contention that often the strife of men after money was in order that they might spend it.

One wonders (but not seriously) whether the orthodox would have regarded this as a profound discovery or a proposition too self-evident to be mentioned. It is quite true that Adam Smith spoke of men's desire to better their condition as a powerful principle. But he was far too sensible a man to contend that gain in itself and without ulterior purposes could constitute the prevalent motive power of human conduct as seen in the strenuous exertions of ambitious men or the plodding toil of common people.

It is a favourite contention of those who doubt or dispute the tendency of humanity in general to buy in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest, that all men are not stockbrokers. This oracular judgment is apparently intended to convey the notion that ordinary persons prefer to buy in the dearest market and sell in the cheapest. Or it may be designed to convey the idea that only in the case of those who deal on the Stock Exchange is the passion for gain a ruling passion, whilst with others it is a negligeable quantity. But it is not many years since the tragic end of a man who had made for himself a great fortune on the Stock Exchange

(by means which at least indicated his striving to get gain) brought into the public gaze what must seem to those who hold the doctrines just mentioned very conflicting motives in one person. Such had been the passion of this man to obtain wealth that he had through improper balance sheets calculated to deceive brought on himself a conviction and sentence of seven years' imprisonment, which he avoided by taking a fatal dose of poison after leaving the prisoners' dock, and before reaching his cell. Yet the newspapers were filled with accounts of his unexampled extravagance and luxury in the expenditure of his wealth; of his statues wrought by highly skilled sculptors from the costliest marble and, since they displeased his fastidious taste, re-wrought into entirely different subjects; of a summer house built beneath the lake which adorned his park; and of stables for his horses, surpassing in grandeur many an ancient palace for the habitation of kings and nobles.

On the other hand, one might take these critics who doubt human passion for gain to bleak uplands where dwell in no luxury or grandeur stock-raisers who

far surpass in the quality of getting and holding the keenest stockbroker to be found in the City. The spheres of these two classes are very different. But their humanity in the economic sense is very much the same. This trait of humanity will be found at least as strongly developed in the man who performs the useful occupation of wresting from Nature in her most niggardly mood the subsistence which is essential to his life, as in the more rapidly moving denizen of civilisation's centre. The glories of his landscape do not usually prevent the farmer or shepherd of the mountain side from being ready to see that his buying is of the cheapest and his selling of the dearest that is possible to him. In the matter of gain if that is to mean more particularly saving he far surpasses those who live in more favoured situations. And but for rent, rates, and taxes, it would be approximately true that he saves all the money he ever sees. He wastes little on candles when work is not on hand, and he might save the expense by going to bed.

Nor are these stockbrokers and stock-raisers by any means singular save in degree. They or others may be getting

in order to spend, or they may be endeavouring to save, but at least they must get. And that involves their having an eye to their own interest and profit, whether they sell their labour or their stock. Indeed, however great may be the differences in human beings as regards their keenness, they are only to be likened to knives and razors more or less sharp according to the individual, but all having a cutting edge which, each in his own degree, is presented when they go to market.

We have constantly to do with the same facts, however expressed, that human beings have appetites and desires which it is always their purpose to fulfil, whether their purpose is weak or strong, their energy great or small. The desires may be for their own benefit or enjoyment, or for the benefit or uplifting of others. But whether their desires are selfish or altruistic they will go about the accomplishment of those desires with as much directness and energy as they chance to possess. They will never purposely put obstacles in their own way. They will not deliberately make their own task harder, however anxious they may be to hinder

the attainment of desires in others which they deem antagonistic to themselves. It is an inherent fact of human nature as of lower natures and all possible higher natures that the most sublime as well as the most homely deed comes from a more or less conscious desire, an aspiration, a purpose. Be the motive what it may, there exists reasoning or instinctive hope or craving before it becomes a deed. When it once reaches that condition of aspiration or desire there will be no intentional failure to do the deed: any failure to do it will arise from lack of power or feebleness of intention.

Nor will any person or being whatever be grateful to the government, society or community which hinders him in the accomplishment of his desires. He can have no wish to be compelled to seek his subsistence in the place or manner most difficult for the produce to be obtained. Any restriction which demands of him that he shall cultivate the ground least fit for the purpose and least likely to yield an increase while better ground stands idle must be objectionable to him. Only ignorance of its operation can enable him to tolerate willingly the dictation of

a government which forces him to do more work for the same result. Still less will he of his own accord do this without such compulsion.

Yet some very serious and popular writers and politicians have argued quite otherwise. The claim that society makes to lay burdens on the individual (for the good, it must be presumed, of society, whoever that may happen to be) will be discussed in another chapter. But there is no need to search for abstruse socialistic theories of this kind. The individual has other arguments offered him against obtaining his necessary subsistence in the easiest possible fashion. He is told with great flourish of trumpets that what he needs is more work. By a strange, yet common, confusion between the means and the end he is apt in large numbers to believe this folly that is told to him. In the old days of the English corn laws one of the great arguments against the repeal of those laws was that the landed families having to reduce their rents would be unable to employ so many retainers and would be obliged to reduce their purchases of goods. It did not occur to all who heard this argument that others

than landed proprietors were willing to become purchasers of goods and services did they but possess the wherewithal to do so.

Amid the jumble of arguments for re-imposition of so-called protective duties, the same plea for increasing employment by reducing facilities for obtaining subsistence has been to the front quite recently. But it in no way differs in essence from the principles of those who would prevent persons of their trade from working longer hours, more strenuously, or for lower wages, than themselves. That is only another way of making work by taking care that others do not do it all and leave nothing to be done. Exactly the same considerations apply to the many and varied schemes for finding work for the unemployed at the public expense. It is forgotten by those who put forward these schemes that the loss on them must be borne by those who get less than they have really earned in order that those employed in this way may be paid more value than they have given.

All these erroneous doctrines, however, are offered to bodies of men, and no person is ever expected in his individual

capacity to observe such theories. When he is told that the foreigner is invading his market it is hoped he will forget he is a consumer as well as a producer. For as a consumer he may not be averse to seeing the foreigner invading his market laden with goods. Nor is it ever expected of him that he should willingly take and cultivate the worse land or be content with less than his money should buy. While even when he is persuaded to sacrifice his interests to those of his trade or the district in which he finds his abode, the appeal is made to his selfishness that he will by this means benefit himself eventually. Whether he will do so or not is no part of our present argument. That is his intention and desire.

CHAPTER II.

Man's Relation to Land.

SUCH being human nature in its economic aspect, there was long ago established what is known as the economic law of rent.

There is no law corresponding in idea to that of a legal enactment. And the variety of customs with regard to land-holding renders it impossible to say without careful consideration of the facts in each case to whom rent in the economic sense is in the particular instance paid, or by whom it is enjoyed. So that law and custom in their ordinary sense must be dismissed at once from contemplation. Nor does the purport of the doctrine refer to the land itself so much as to the minds of the people desiring to use or possess land. It is in fact simply a question of motive. It is a conclusion drawn from the observed nature of economic man, confirmed by experience and establishing

with practical uniformity and certainty a tendency with regard to the amount of rent which is likely to be paid.

This conclusion as to general tendency is admitted to a place as a natural or scientific law. The basis of it is that land is very unequal in value. It differs in fertility and proximity to markets, with many minor variations which may or may not be able to be classed under these two circumstances. And economic man being what he is, desiring the use of land for the profit and advantage it brings him in the form of food or other produce, he is willing to give a rent for the superior land equal to the whole excess of its value over that which is only just worth cultivating free of rent altogether. The contention that he cannot get any land free of rent does not destroy the validity of the law, or, to express it otherwise, does not disprove the tendency. It is not necessary to find clear cut and definite instances. It is only necessary to understand so much of human nature when it is free to seek its own interest and welfare.

But it is of the utmost importance to realise that there exists this inequality in the value of land because of its situation,

fertility, climate, water supply or other circumstances; that those who can acquire the most desirable land have something which is of value apart from what they may have done to make it fruitful, and that they get an advantage which was not created by them or their predecessors in title. We have to assume that there is available free of rent land which is worth cultivating. It may be across the sea, but that does not disturb the argument. Some land here at present only just pays for cultivating. What is better than that contains in its ownership command of what is called economic rent. And if it is in or near towns where the cultivation consists of erecting buildings, works, and dwellings on it the economic rent is correspondingly increased.

That which is only just worth cultivating free of rent is said to be at the margin of cultivation. What is worse produces no rent and is not cultivated. The excess value of what is better is economic rent. All the value per year of its superiority as a wealth producer owing to its situation, natural fertility, elevation, climate, natural water supply or minerals, is rent in the economic sense. All the annual value of

the buildings, fences, artificial water supply, draining, roadmaking, cultivation, mine sinking, and such improvement is interest on capital and not rent at all in the economic sense. Rent in the ordinary sense may often be paid for what is really below the margin of cultivation, and has been made valuable by the expenditure of capital. But that is not economic rent. The essence of economic rent lies in natural superiority and the attractiveness which inevitably results from proximity to the population whose needs are to be supplied.

At the risk of tediousness it seems desirable to make this question as clear as possible since economic rent and the margin of cultivation are terms of frequent occurrence, and they are not well understood. Their signification is necessary to be understood by any intelligent legislator of these days. But how small would be the fraction of the Lords and Commons who could give reasonable definitions of the terms.

The question refers only to land in its natural or unimproved condition. If the condition induced by constant cultivation is such as to seem its natural condition the attempted distinction is liable to so

much error. But the error is quite infinitesimal compared with the existing method of regarding the whole improvement as part of the land. The old expression of Ricardo regarded rent as the benefit of "the use of the original and indestructible powers of the soil." The word soil as here used clearly stands for more than the top soil. The land may be worth more when the soil is stripped off altogether so as to get at the subsoil or the minerals. Or its value may consist in its desirable situation. In its only reasonable sense, however, economic rent is payment for, or enjoyment of, land in its natural condition unimproved by human industry.

It is worth repeating that the improvements effected by the expenditure of capital and labour upon it are in the economic sense capital. A house or building, a road or railway, fences and artificial watercourses are additions to the value of land and the income or advantage to be derived from their use must in sound equity belong to those who put them there or paid for their being put there. Nothing could be more important to be borne in mind by the sociologist,

statesman, or legislator, than the distinction between the value of the land itself in its unimproved condition and the value of what has been put in or upon it. It may be difficult, or even impossible, now to separate the two in a physical sense without loss or destruction of the value which has been added to the land. But for many purposes it is easy to decide what the respective values are as well at least as it is possible ever to determine values. And that has of necessity constantly to be done with some attempt at approximation.

The distinction has several clearly marked aspects. For instance, the root of the title of the two values is quite different. To the value of the land itself the title must have begun by reason of the fact that someone got there and took possession. The subsequent dealings may have consisted of forcible or fraudulent ousting or peaceful purchasing. But no person created it. The value may have risen through excess of demand for the land; but that value is not the creation of the original possessor or subsequent holder.

On the other hand, the value added to

the land owes its existence to the industry and self-denial of some person or persons owning or working on the land. It may have been a pleasure and not a pain to them. But at least it was within their choice to have directed their attention to less beneficial purposes. The value they have created by the election they have made stands on a very different footing from the value of what existed, continues to exist, and must continue, independent of their exertions.

Moreover, the difference in effect between encouraging and discouraging the purchase or creation of these added values is highly important to the community. When in 1894 the Chancellor of the Exchequer increased the death taxes on the passing of landed estates there were many suggestions that great landowners would sell their estates and go abroad. Among those who understood the nature of the threatened catastrophe these suggestions were apt to generate somewhat unbecoming levity, and they indulged in a deferential hope that the owners would leave the land behind them when they shook its dust off their feet. Indeed, there are cases in which all that an owner

has done or can do by way of justification for receiving the profit and advantage of a piece of land is merely to possess it. In these cases the government as representing the whole community has a distinct advantage in encouraging him to stand off it altogether.

But a discouragement to enterprise in the shape of a tax or penalty based on the use or occupation of land and its improvements is so palpably a piece of folly that were it not all too prevalent a method it would be difficult to imagine any government imposing such a tax. That a man should buy up possession of what he knows others need and must have is in accordance with human nature. As economic man he sees clearly that they must give him a share in the produce for the permission to cultivate or use it. That a government should so impose its taxation as to encourage the one to buy it and keep it unused while penalising the others for expending their capital and energy upon it is so manifestly to the disadvantage of the nation, that one is forced to conclude either crass stupidity or corrupt class interest in the taxing authority. And to discourage a person

from buying or holding what cannot be produced without labour is to discourage its being produced at all.

As usually happens in cases of injustice and wrong, wickedness and weakness have combined, the knave and the fool have each had a hand in making and perpetuating this particular public iniquity. A landowning class with the power of government behind them would not be likely to take upon themselves or retain any portion of the onerous burdens of the state that they could avoid. And if it could be so arranged that the contributions should be paid by those who occupied and toiled upon the land whilst the owners received free of burdens or deduction a share of the produce, it was not to be expected the owners would decline the opportunity. Whilst they held the whole of the political power the responsibility for whatever injustice was involved must be laid at their door, whether they completely realised their unfairness or were only deaf to all interests but their own. When, however, political power passed to a wider circle, the responsibility passed with it—to ignorant and undiscerning people: blind led by blind.

To those of the classes who form the great bulk of the consumers and who are yet content as such to tax themselves for the purpose of protecting the home market, and making themselves work, it is useless to argue until that veil is taken from their eyes. They can have no sympathy with a doctrine that it is desirable to encourage and not discourage production of subsistence. Their whole theory is to discourage as far as possible too free an offering of the produce of labour and capital because such offering tends to cheapness and plenty. They are very numerous even in this country, and still more so on the continent of Europe and in America. But while the Continent has to some extent taught us these foolish doctrines, there are in this country numbers who, in the present state of political affairs and parties, are a menace to public welfare because they cannot distinguish between the property which has had to be toiled for and produced and the land which has only been possessed.

This is not a matter for humble suggestion, such as has come from those who felt themselves in some sense representatives of property; it is a matter for

strong conviction and emphatic assertion. When the government, in any of its forms, imposes a tax on that which can only be brought into existence by industry and abstinence, it discourages to that extent the enterprise by which the people are fed, clothed, and sheltered. Men work and save for their personal advantage, and the power to carry out their own desires—except as to those who merely talk as a means of effecting that object. If they find that their enterprise is only rewarded with burdens put upon them by the government because they have worked and given evidence of their work, they naturally cease their projects. If efforts to provide for the wants of others and the outlay of purchasing power in aids to production, are penalised with taxes, the discouragement of industry is inevitable. It ought to be obvious in a clear mental atmosphere.

The fact that these efforts are engaged in for profit is the very reason why the remark is true and the discouragement is certain. If they were engaged in for pleasure there would be more doubt on the point. People may take their pleasure at a loss and take it none the less

readily because it becomes a costly luxury. They may even count the difficulty of attaining it an enhancement of its virtues when once the difficulty is overcome. But profit is merely a question of arithmetic. The labour and difficulty of obtaining it must be put on the loss side when the net profit is contemplated. Every man who seeks profit is constantly striving to eliminate or reduce the various items on the other side. He literally cannot ignore an expense with the feeling that he gets its worth in pleasure or health. His whole purpose is profit when he is providing for the wants of others in the way of business. An expense or deduction from the profit thwarts to its whole extent his purpose and so far deters his efforts. The result must be a more scanty provision for the needs of the nation.

Even those erections and improvements which are intended for residential purposes, and are therefore to some extent improvements for the occupants' pleasure, can only be hindered by a tax on their occupation. The housing of the nation must be worse for the fact that a tax or rate is levied on the occupation of houses in proportion to their annual letting value. Improved

housing in all stages of human civilisation has always come subsequent to the satisfaction of the craving for food and drink, and the gratification of the desire for clothing and personal decoration.

It may be granted that the improvement is an aid to civilisation. But the improvement itself can only be attained out of a surplus. To imagine that the housing of a nation can be permanently improved by compulsory means while the occupants enjoy only a stinted supply of food and clothing is to ignore human nature. A few exceptional cases of keeping up appearances and living in a house beyond the occupants' means, by pinching and saving in the matter of food and clothes, do not disprove the general rule. In other words, an abundant supply of food and clothes within the means of practically all the members of a community is the surest guarantee that the people will begin to turn their attention to improvement in their houses. To levy penalties on the occupation of houses in proportion to the desirability of the houses as residences can only hinder such improvement. And the hindrance will be the more effective as a hindrance in pro-

portion to the unsupplied desire for a better supply of food and clothes.

None of these considerations apply to a tax on the ownership of land assessed on its unimproved value. That we repeat is the subject of economic rent. The question of land and rent is only of moment to us here as it affects the doings and motives of economic man. But in dealing with economic man we are dealing with all mankind. No unit of the whole race is exempt from the physical needs which justify the appellation of economic. The word has been considerably modified in its meaning, but it sufficiently clearly indicates the aspect of man which relates to his material requirements.

And in speaking of land we are speaking of the one great element with which economic man is concerned. Outside himself there is no other object capable of being put in comparison with land. For land is the earth on which he lives and from which he must draw his sustenance. The view which regards land as merely one of several species of property is superficial to absurdity.

In the earlier stages of human progress it is not private property at all. The

tribesmen roam over it as freely as if they were still a tribe of monkeys. Even when we see the race congregated into caves, only the dwellings have been appropriated. When we find rude habitations erected with more or less skill along the river side or in the midst of the forest, we are faced with the idea of property in its strict and justifiable sense. If the erection of a dwelling is not to carry the right for its builders to its use, the progress of mankind must be sent backward, let modern reformers say what they will. And undoubtedly they do in the British Parliament say unreproved what is contrary to this principle. But speaking generally the first step in the appropriation of land is the appropriation of a district by a tribe. Within the tribe the district is common to all. If another tribe invades the area it does so at its own peril, and trusts in its superior strength.

Such a condition is however inconsistent with the needs of advanced civilisation. It may do well enough for a tribe of hunters or wandering herdsmen. The wild animals and the natural herbage are for those who can take them. But it will not do at all for modern methods of cultivation

and industry, or for the modes of commerce and transit which have become part of our everyday life. It will not suffice for the needs of the highest or best civilisation. For the latter conditions a more or less permanent appropriation of particular sites and areas is absolutely essential to the use of the land.

Which brings us face to face with the question of private property in land. There is much loose thinking on the subject. One says private property in land is iniquitous and wrong. He is probably quite correct in his thought if he would only express it more fully. Another says that to take a man's land is confiscation. He also has essentially important truths on his side. But truth is never inconsistent with itself. And the facts of the case are that each has failed to say what he really meant. So far as the land owes its value to human effort in its improvement it must be treated as private property or injustice will be done. So far as it owes its value to natural superiority in situation, fertility, minerals, or otherwise it is an injustice to give the benefit to the private individual.

But it is only true in the contemplation

of natural equity. And it has been settled in London that there is no such thing. It is useless to discuss the individual man's natural rights. It is quite decided that he has none. Manchester seems to have fallen into the same doctrine and now considers expediency, not justice, in its politics. Though it gets up to indicate strongly that taxes on imports are not expedient. Scotland is perhaps less complacent to the doctrine of expediency, but makes little effective protest. So that we must perhaps confine our arguments to the question of expediency.

Nevertheless, we must realise the contrast as species of property between land and the value which has been added to it by human effort. Without such a realisation we cannot understand what is or what is not expedient for the community or race. So far as the community claims what has been produced by the individual it impoverishes the nation by taking away the incentive to production.

But no such result comes from taking from the individual the value of Nature's free gift. On the exact contrary, further impoverishment comes from failure to take it. For if under the confusion

between land and its improvements the community gives the individual the unqualified ownership of what Nature gave to the race he may come to maintain himself on the mere ownership. If there are individuals who own no land they will be glad to give him a portion of the produce they can raise; merely for the use of the land. So far as that is the value of the unimproved land, which he did not make valuable, he is consuming what in natural justice (if there were any such thing) would belong to the community. And the very right which the community concedes to him of holding the land as his own rendering no account and paying no tax on it enables him to disregard all the needs of the community except his own. However urgently the land may be required he is empowered to say that it shall not be held except on terms which are agreeable to him. His terms may be prohibitive; and the more abundantly he himself is already provided for the more likely they are to be prohibitive.

So that not only is he enabled to enjoy the results of the labours of others, but he is also permitted to determine that

others shall not be so much as free to exert their labours to the best advantage. When we add to these considerations the further observation that the community is thus forced to claim a discouraging tax on the labours of the landless for necessary public purposes, and that the public burdens become the more onerous because of the unused monopoly of land, we surely indicate the colossal evil of confusing the natural land with any other kind of property.

But there is an aspect of the subject which has never had due regard from economists and social scientists. Reference was made to the margin of cultivation in discussing what has been called the economic law of rent. Now the margin of cultivation as we have said is rather a question of human motives than of physical fact. It differs in this respect from the doctrine of the law of diminishing returns. This latter doctrine is to the effect that successive additions of capital and labour in the cultivation of land will produce ever diminishing returns proportionately to the outlay. This is clearly not a question of human motives but of physical fact and agricultural or

industrial science. We cannot, therefore, follow the question as we might do in discussing the whole subject of land or political economy. But we may venture the suggestion that in the only sense in which it could be important it is not true. In the sense in which it can be true it is of no moment. The doctrine was recently used by a then Prime Minister as an argument to a deputation who waited upon him. If the suggestion here made is well founded the argument was bad, though the case might be quite good, despite the bad argument.

It is difficult to assign limits to the produce of agricultural operations on a piece of land under the ordinary rotation of crops. There is a vast difference between the best farming and the worst. Speaking generally, there is great room for improvement even in lands professedly agricultural before the law of diminishing returns comes into operation. But we cannot get even so far without coming upon the subject of human motives and the question whether the inducement to further outlay is present or not. If the result of the successful application of further increments of capital and labour

will be an increase of rent and a consequent increase of rates and taxes the incentive is destroyed. This is even true though there may be some reward left for the extra toil after additional deductions for landlord and community. A man does not choose to put himself on full stretch and then share the proceeds with those who have done nothing to help him and are probably better off than himself.

But the law of diminishing returns in this limited application neglects several factors which must be brought into any reasonable view of its application to human society drawing subsistence from land. It says nothing of improved methods of culture. It makes no reference to mechanical inventions by which the same capital and labour do more work. It ignores improvements in the plant itself of which the crop is to be formed. If it can be said to allow for these factors it is only by a considerable enlargement of view from that in which it has ever been presented. By no conceivable stretch can it be made to cover the further factors which exist. If the plant be altogether changed from wheat, for instance, to celery,

from clover to tomatoes, the law is altogether broken. There is no longer any connection whatever. A law which is constantly being broken off and having to begin again within the same region of application is of no service. When, moreover, the change is from the cultivation of plants, however intense the culture may be, to other modes of occupation, still greater emphasis is laid on the insufficiency of the law. The gulf over which it has to leap is made so much wider and deeper that it loses all semblance of force or applicability.

The law of rent is, however, not at all interfered with by taking a view corresponding to man and his whole habitat. Dealing with motives, it is still true that rent is the excess value of the land in question over that which is just worth using. And it matters nothing that the use is changed altogether from pasture land to ironworks, or from barley fields to housing sites. Rent in the economic sense is a surplus value owing its existence to natural inequalities and not to the expenditure of capital or labour. The law of rent is simply a rule of human motives: the result of the tendency of human beings

to prefer pleasure to pain and ease to toil. The law of diminishing returns is a law of something outside the human mind or it is no law at all. Its validity is doubtful and palpably restricted.

Political economy, which is the base of all sound social science, was based on too narrow a foundation. It was first framed in, and for, a condition of society which preceded the developments of the last century. An agricultural people with a fringe of other industry gave to the science the form which it too long held. John Stuart Mill thought to establish the law of diminishing returns by stating in controversy that an enlarged market involves an increased population and a lowering of the margin of cultivation. Such an argument could only apply to a purely agricultural society. The margin of cultivation completely changes its outline and its level when the character of the national industry changes. The wheat farms of Essex become of less importance when the people of Lancashire have brought the prairies of America, the plains of India, and the steppes of Russia, into the area of supply.

This is no lowering of the margin of

cultivation despite the increased population. A portion of the land hitherto cultivated can be dispensed with because a new means and fresh kinds of production have been discovered. As Henry George with his characteristic eloquence has shown us, the people engaged in the manufacturing industries are certainly though indirectly providing for their needs by their own efforts. What they produce is not food. But there is no need to take into cultivation worse land in this country on that account. So soon as trade with the world is set free the best wheat lands in the world are brought within the margin, and that raises, not depresses, the margin of cultivation.

On the other hand, it transpires in course of time that the wheat lands of Lincolnshire (which, despite the increase in population, are no longer profitable as wheat lands) have other uses open to them. There is no need to submit to diminishing returns. For wheat growing, it is true, the demand has not risen despite the increased population. But other changes have taken place. And the returns from additional increments of capital and labour greatly increase instead

of diminishing. This results from a simple change in the nature of the crop. Instead of wheat the land is set to grow vegetables for the London or other such market, not merely in market gardens but in forms. Such is the effect upon the supply of subsistence for the community of leaving the individual free to seek his own advantage.

At what level and in what form the margin of cultivation or use of the land shall stand does not, it will be seen, depend upon the mere increase or decrease of population. It depends on the sum total of the influences at work on the motives affected; and mere increase or decrease of numbers is only one such influence. It is a declared doctrine of those to whom nowadays we bow the knee as the social reformers and saviours of society that the conditions of supply have no effect upon demand. "When people wanted coal they would pay for it, and if they did not want it they would not buy it." Such was the language of a Trades Union leader more worthy of respect than most of such leaders. Unfortunately for mankind, professed and prominent economists have given too

much support to the same doctrine. But it is utterly at variance with the facts.

There is no rigid limit to the amount of material subsistence which a nation may consume except the limit of what is produced. No nation can consume what does not exist. But given the supply or freedom to produce the supply, there are no bounds to what the same number of people may choose to enjoy. The total consumption of very varying kinds will increase as their standard of subsistence is permitted to rise : that is, with increased facilities for obtaining the subsistence. The margin of cultivation stands for an indication of the class of land which for the time being is worth cultivating. All above that in value produces rent to its owner. None below it is worth using rent free. That is a kind of mathematical formula which economists have laid down for their discussion. But this margin is obviously no more definite or rigid than the demand for the produce of land. If the demand increases worse land can be used to advantage. The great mistake is to imagine that the demand can only increase with the increase of population.

The people at any moment in existence could and would consume immeasurably more if they could get it. That they would take it in increased variety rather than increased quantity of the same kind is not to be disputed or regretted. In that direction lies human progress, as Herbert Spencer has so well shown.

By what means, however, is this result to be brought about? It is not clearly apparent that those who claim to be alone progressive in their views have any such result in their minds. But if they have any such purpose before them it is very certain they are not advocating the means by which the end can be brought about. Already we have seen the advantages of freedom from industrial control in increased supply of those objects for which a desire is evidenced. Nor have we failed to indicate how such a supply is reduced by the imposition of restrictive taxes diminishing the incentive to supply, and quite as certainly also reduced by failure to impose taxes on the ownership of the natural source of production.

What does seem to be contemplated by those who have any desire for improvement involving change from present cir-

cumstances we may notice hereafter. But there is no advocacy of increased economic freedom. The tendency is quite the other way. There is no party so much as pretending that it has steadily in view diminished taxation on private enterprise or individual industry. At the utmost there is a promise to save in some directions in order to spend more freely in others.

The one thing that is most clear is that there is no adequate consideration of the motives which make for progress. So far from encouraging the freedom which tends to abundance and variety, there is every endeavour made to shape the course of every unit after a fashion devised by the ruling powers.

In the United States of America such a statement would not quite describe the conditions. But there the economic freedom of the mass of the people has been handed over to the control of a few strong and wealthy individuals. This state of affairs in America is described on the eastern side of the Atlantic in various terms signifying liberty-gone-mad. But if liberty in that country is foaming at the mouth it is because she has been

bound hand and foot, her very tongue tied, and her lips forcibly closed. It is restriction and tyranny that runs riot under cover of democratic and republican institutions. If instead of seeking to bind the trusts and direct the whole course of industry the ruling powers would restore economic freedom to the people, they would with infinitely more effect render the whole trust movement innocuous. We cannot stay to argue this and can therefore only call it a suggestion.

But the difference in this respect between the Old World and the New is only one of degree. The impotent efforts to curb the tyranny of trusts by restriction in the United States correspond to the advocacy of ever increasing bonds in the older countries by which to remedy the existing lack of freedom. Not thus or by any artificial contrivance for control of the individual by the society or community can the nation hope to be blessed with greater abundance. By no conceivable means can the unit of humanity be induced to prefer the desires of others to his own. Their welfare as he understands it he may not infrequently put

before his own. But the desires which move him must have become his own before they move him. And he will not go far from himself to seek the direction or determination of his desires.

Most assuredly he will not produce material subsistence the more abundantly because of the diminution of incentive to production. The nation must be more scantily supplied as the result of such loss of motive. So far as land is concerned the business of the ruler should be to ensure that no part of the produce which results from effort and the application of capital should be taken from the producer. But at the same time and for that very reason he must also see that no part of the territory is monopolised except on terms of paying annually to the common funds the annual value of the unimproved land as Nature left it.

This is no place wherein to attempt any explanation whatever of the method of imposing such a tax. Existing conditions, laws of title and devolution, varying and complicated tenures, partial ownerships, outstanding interests in land and its improvements, contracts already entered into, capital values in proportion

to annual values, with other not simple considerations: must all be taken into account in the actual imposition of the tax. It would require a considerable volume to indicate due regard to these various factors in the mode of imposition apart from any discussion of the principle of taxation itself. There is no evidence that those who acknowledge the principle have any adequate realisation of these factors. And there is every reason to believe that the principle itself will need much more advocacy and explanation before its merits are realised at their full worth by a sufficiently powerful section of the governing body to ensure its establishment as a principle. As a measure of expediency, so called, and a means of extorting additional taxation no words of approval will be given to it in these pages.

Our path, however, lies in another direction. To the uninitiated it will not appear that the progress of mankind will be furthered by social contrivances which render the land as useless as possible, or laws and methods of taxation which have a tendency to restrict its use. From them we may assume assent to the proposition

that the freedom of mankind absolutely demands freedom of necessary access to the land from which subsistence must be drawn, with such equal facilities for its cultivation as accord with justice. The conception of justice in this case must needs be a scientific conception: but none the less natural for that reason. The word natural often seems to be understood as carrying with it the notion of primitive wildness. But the latest or most intricate invention, the most beautiful human contrivance, depends on the ascertainment and adaptation of natural forces. Science itself is knowledge of Nature. And though it has been quite decided by some wondrously clever people that there never were any natural rights of the individual, so that there cannot be any natural justice, yet those who are only asking for liberty may reasonably contend that they never regarded liberty without access to land as liberty at all.

It is not even natural liberty which puts fences round large tracts of the earth's surface; with or without man-traps, but always with the watchful eye of the law in a blue coat to guard against

trespassers: unless the fencing is subject to some reasonable qualification. Absolute primitive wildness would not allow or recognise the fences: they and the man-traps would be destroyed. A religious sanction would probably create the first taboo. But the human race in society may, with understanding of Nature, and without destroying human liberty, accord to particular individuals certain rights over defined portions of land. These rights may amount to a monopoly of that land if given in exchange for an adequate consideration to the advantage of the remainder of the race. This is no new doctrine of liberty. The most extreme advocate of freedom has always deemed it permissible to give up a defined portion of freedom for sufficient inducement, and to be held liable to carry out his bargain.

Human liberty with regard to land is infringed, however, on two sides. There is nothing curious in the fact that the evil is a double one. It is always so in economic conditions. The two departures from strict rectitude are mutually dependent. That a nation should accord to individuals the ownership and monopoly

of land without any consideration in the way of annual contribution to the common funds is one obliquity. And it necessitates another in the subtraction from those to whom no such monopoly has been secured, of what they have by their own labour produced, without aid or favour from the taxing authority.

The contention is set up that the individual is protected by the nation in the enjoyment of his productions, and should therefore pay for that protection. In other words, the nation charges him for protection against itself. Blackmail is the term usually applied to that sort of extortion. Or if it be argued that the protection is against foreign nations, then the answer is clear that foreign nations would come if they came at all for the land he holds. But the land by our hypothesis he holds only as occupier—probably to a very small extent, and that very indirectly. He pays rent, directly or indirectly, for protection in his occupation of the land. The owner gets protected in his ownership for nothing besides having the concession without consideration of a natural agent of subsistence-production.

These digressions into questions of morality are not, however, in our direct line of thought. Neither to the uninitiated nor to those whose minds are already subject to prepossession on the subject are they a necessary part of the argument. But a single line of argument will not obliterate an existing track of belief. It will require the broad deep worn path of familiar truths. All that we need to consider as proved hitherto is (1) that human beings have certain necessary desires the fulfilment of which is essential to their continued existence and maintenance; (2) that they will seek to attain the fulfilment of their desires in the easiest and most convenient manner; (3) that in view of the conditions under which the land produces the maximum of human subsistence these desires inevitably create what is termed economic rent: a surplus value in the market of mankind (whether annual value or capital value) inhering in certain land of superior desirability which value does not owe its existence to any efforts of present or past owners; and (4) that to assess taxes on the results or necessary conditions of human effort whilst leaving free of taxa-

tion the ownership of natural surplus value is to offer a twofold discouragement to production of subsistence. There is a penalty on enterprise against him who would produce, and the means of sharing the result without the effort in favour of him who holds the source of production.

PART II.

RACE INFLUENCES, SOCIETY'S BURDENS AND ALTRUISTIC MOTIVES.

CHAPTER III.

The Individual and Society.

"*EVERYWHERE they looked among the social insects they found that social evolution had invariably been accompanied by two results—the increase in social efficiency and the increasing burden which society laid on the individual.*"—Mr. Benjamin Kidd, at the London Institution.

This was the passage which met my eye, accidentally it would seem, when I was endeavouring to explain that the individual could have neither interest nor desire that his living should be made more difficult to obtain. It was quoted as "Wisdom while you wait," by a morning newspaper which calls itself a Leader. I have waited long to see the wisdom, but having failed to find wisdom, and

being interested in the quotation, I must take it to pieces to see what it really does contain. The passage is so expressive of the false philosophy which has obtained credence in recent years that it shall serve as the text on which to base a close examination of the whole series of spurious doctrines. The tendencies of human conduct affecting the supply of human needs can never be adequately understood by those who are dominated by the specious theories which have prevailed and still prevail as to the relation between the individual and society. The very explanation of the term society ought to destroy the whole of these theories. But we had better inspect the complete series of notions of which the doctrine consists.

We begin by looking among the insects —the social insects. But why? Why among the insects at all? For a long time we have been told on the subject of economics and social science that men must not hope for a solution of its problems save by the aid of competent knowledge of the science of biology. But verily of all the nonsense we have heard in these late years to the effect that we must study our economics, pounds, shillings,

and pence, barter and exchange, rent, poor rates and taxes: in and through the biology which deals with the beginnings and lower forms of life we seem to be coming to a climax. "Go to the ant, thou sluggard: consider her ways and be wise," said the regal sage of old; but it was to the sluggard that this piece of advice was addressed. Are we now to understand that the philosopher and statesman are to go to the ant for their model of an improved and perfected society, or that the Creator of all should copy on a larger scale His efforts in the evolution and organisation of bees? And why among the social insects? If we needs must be insects is compulsion laid upon us that we be of this social-slaving sort? May we not dance in the sunlight as butterflies? But if so, let us all dance there, and let us all take our turns at grubbing each in his own fit sphere. We can have no complaint from a social point of view if each must pass the stage of grub or caterpillar, chrysalis and butterfly. But if some must be beetles, and others spiders, that a few may be butterflies we had better perhaps retain our manhood and womanhood than go to the

insects at all. We must, however, improve on our present condition. For we too nearly approach already a condition in which a few get all the turns in the sunlight and the rest get darkness, drudgery and dirt. And before we go to the social insects for our model we had better consider whether that is likely to be an improvement or not, and whether we can adopt and live under it.

It may be possible to learn something from the existing organisations of social insects likely to afford us help in our own legislative enactments. We will not dispute it beforehand. But what do we know about their social evolution? To judge by the sentence before us it might have been watched for thousands of years and its results carefully recorded. The truth is that we have infinitely more good material for judging of the social evolution of mankind than we have in respect of the social insects. And even if we are satisfied that their social evolution is most desirable to be emulated we are not prepared to put its methods into practice. Failing that, how can they help us?

We are not anxious to copy slaveholding

from ants. Milk cows we already have and profit by without learning their use from insects. Indeed, there is little we can learn for our own imitation from the social insects except perhaps from bees, which are said to slay at the end of each summer the drones from the hive, that the maintenance of these drones may not be a burden on the labours of the individuals who have filled the hives with food. Against such a proposal if one may understand it to be definitely made, no word of protest or argument shall be offered here beyond suggesting that the process if adopted should be thoroughly and efficiently carried out and the whole of society carefully searched for its drones or idle ones. But what was the process of evolution by which it came about that one queen bee should be the mother of all the young in the hive: that surplus potential queens should be destroyed without opportunity given to propagate the species: that the major part of the females should have only the instinct to work and eat without desire or possibility of motherhood: of this and much else we cannot be sure. That all this is excellent in its way for the raising and

continuance of bees need not be disputed, and particularly the slaying of the idle ones considered as such. Though considering that these are the males for which the females have no longer any use and therefore thus dispose of them, the method is not calculated to inspire the mere male man with any fervent desire for human imitation of bees in all their ways.

But for any bearing on our conscious establishment, modification, or development of human social institutions, all this insect lore is futile and useless. These insects do what they do in response to an instinct or motive within each one of them which may or may not be the same as that within a human being. There is frequently a close correspondence between the two. But clearly if we are to study motives at all affecting human society it must be the motives of human beings and not the motives of insects. The motives of the insects, though we may not understand them perfectly, do obviously move them. But there are distinctions between the social insects and human society which render any analogy whatever between them worse than useless as indicative of a model.

Mankind cannot imitate the drastic methods we have noticed for disposing of the useless amongst social insects male and female. The doctrines of Malthus on the population question were insipidly tame beside the actual practice of bees. No tendency of population to increase beyond the means of subsistence counts with them. They put a stop to it. They meet the cry of free meals for school children at the expense of the state by slaying the mothers of the children that might be while those mothers are themselves still in infancy. The unemployed are treated as idlers and loafers, and though they are left in peace during the summer, when tramping is congenial to all and subsistence less difficult to procure, yet they are not permitted to disturb the comfort of the hive in the stress of winter: their corpses have been left to weather outside. Nor is the drastic method (of the application whereof to humanity one might well despair) at all necessary in the case of the higher race. Here again we see that the analogy is quite an impossible one. The insects do certainly labour and provide a common store. But they must keep the population down to correspond

with the store. Humanity can increase the provision to correspond with the population. It only requires the silencing of the more talkative supporters of uselessness and a fairer chance for the useful.

Whilst birds may unconsciously plant trees and bees may fructify plants, man alone has learnt not only how to gather and prepare, but also to make grow and increase. Here, therefore, for the purposes of social organisation is not merely an evolution, but a veritable revolution. There would be no need for the checks on population if insect society happened to possess science enough to teach them how to increase ten or a hundredfold the amount available for gathering.

Yet another distinction in favour of humanity must be added to this. For the possibilities of increase which human beings derive from their knowledge of agricultural and mechanical science are multiplied by the possibility of exchange. This enables one man or set of men to devote themselves entirely to the production of one kind of food, or other wealth, in the place and manner most suitable for it. They are conscious that although they cannot by any possibility consume the

whole of their production they can by disposing of their surplus in exchange obtain a quantity and variety of other products which they could not themselves by any means have produced directly.

Needless to say, such an argument cannot appeal to those who believe in taxes, hindrances and restrictions on the sale of labour and exchange of produce. But it moderates one's admiration of the infinite perfections and adaptabilities of the universe that such people were not born among the insects where the trading is unknown, thus saving the trouble to themselves and the loss to other people of their restrictions. And in comparing those insects with humanity we realise that it is at least as beneficial that the individual should be able to provide for his offspring as that the population should be stinted within Nature's own provision.

Here we must leave the insects. What their social evolution has been with regard to the two generalisations still to be mentioned which form the purport of the whole remark I do not know. If I venture to doubt the knowledge of the author of that remark on the point it is not on the ground of any competence

of mine in biology, but on the ground of a very obvious incompetence of his theory to carry the contention he suggests. For even without knowing the context it is safe to conclude that he is speaking not as naturalist but as social philosopher, and that his intention is to apply this dictum to human society—increase of human social efficiency and increase of human society's burden on the individual.

If there is any evidence of this theory with reference to the social insects it is still another contrast to the evolution of the human race. For what human history tells us of social efficiency and the burden of society on the individual is that, over and over again, nation after nation has gone down, race after race has decayed and died away, from this increase of social efficiency at the expense of individual efficiency, and the increasing burden which society laid on the individual. Where are the ancient Egyptians with their social efficiency? The pyramids tell of the efficiency, but where in their descendants are they? What has become of the Assyrians? The excavations of Layard and others have revealed to us their social efficiency. But what of themselves as a

nation or race? Babylon was the seat of a nation great and socially efficient. Its ruins faintly suggest its grandeur. But what has been the evolution of its people by way of their social efficiency? For social efficiency no nation ever surpassed Imperial Rome. But what was the final outcome of it all? Socially efficient Rome fell before individually efficient barbarism. Such has been the almost invariable downfall of nations. The secret of it all is bad economics.

Luxury and wealth surrounded by poverty result from, and also cause, this social efficiency, and the increasing burden on the individual of what is called society. This social efficiency means regimentation —the individual is an organ or instrument of the society as represented by the government. The increasing burden of society on the individual is not what helps forward man's evolution and progress. Wherever this happens and the burden is not got rid of by the individual the nation goes down, and makes room for a better (because more free) social organisation and individual development.

The real greatness of the Greeks was in their individuality. Their social efficiency

was built on their individual efficiency, and compared with the subordination of the unit to the whole race gave a splendid account of itself in both ways. It reckons in the history of mankind far beyond its bulk; but not for its social efficiency.*

The Jewish race survives to-day unabsorbed both as a sect and as a nation, not through becoming socially efficient, but the reverse. It never did become socially efficient in comparison to its real efficiency and strength. But it retained its vitality through its bondage, its captivity, and even

*Lord Macaulay (Essay on Machiavelli) says: "There are errors in these works. But they are errors which a writer situated like Machiavelli could scarcely avoid. They arise, for the most part, from a single defect, which appears to us to pervade his whole system. In his political scheme the means had been more deeply considered than the ends. The great principle that societies and laws exist only for the purpose of increasing the sum of private happiness is not recognised with sufficient clearness. The good of the body, distinct from the good of the members, and sometimes hardly compatible with the good of the members, seems to be the object which he proposes to himself. Of all political fallacies, this has, perhaps, had the widest and the most mischievous operation. The state of society in the little commonwealths of Greece, the close connection and mutual dependence of the citizens, and the severity of the laws of war tended to encourage an opinion which, under such circumstances, could hardly be called erroneous. The interests of every individual were inseparably bound up with those of the state. An invasion destroyed his cornfields and vineyards, drove him from his home, and compelled him to encounter all the hardships of a military life. A treaty of peace restored him to security and comfort. A victory doubled the number of his slaves. A defeat perhaps made him a slave himself .. Hence, among the Greeks patriotism became a governing principle, or rather an ungovernable passion. Their legislators and their philosophers took it for granted that, in providing for the strength and greatness of the state, they sufficiently provided for the happiness of the people. The writers of the Roman empire lived under despots, into whose dominion a hundred nations were melted down, and whose gardens would have covered the little commonwealths of Phlius and Platæa. Yet

through its apparent engulfment in the Roman Empire. Its persecutions, perhaps, made it stronger, for it was strong enough to rise above them. But the Jews have been always a persistent people. Socially efficient they were not. Their prophets hurled defiance at their most powerful kings. The individual flung off with impatience any increasing burden of society. When the Cæsars were just passing the stage beyond which they could no longer be classed as mortal men, having attained more power over their fellows than any number of men combined ought

they continued to employ the same language, and to cant about the duty of sacrificing everything to a country to which they owed nothing."

It is impossible to follow all the comparisons which are suggested when we apply these remarks to the various forms in which society demands the subordination of the individual. The idea is well conveyed, however, that it is not for the sake of society but for the sake of the individual that the individual can properly be asked to subordinate his individual interest. When danger or evil threatens all alike the need for common action may require the curtailment of private well being simply that private well being may thus the better be served. It is quite another thing when society (not meaning all the individuals) asks for sacrifice to itself of individual freedom and welfare for the good of its rulers. As intimated in the first chapter, any voluntary surrender of that sort involves the belief, however ill founded, that the surrender will bring an adequate return.

The reader should very carefully bear in mind this distinction between sacrifice for a common though individual advantage, and sacrifice for an advantage which only glorifies the government—the state as distinct from individuals. He is more fortunate in his reading than I am if he finds this distinction emphasised in twentieth century literature. Says an intelligent, well read *but* up-to-date friend in an address to electors issued as this book is in the press, " The great principle of the times in which we live is that of the civic well being as opposed to all private interest." He goes on to discuss the lot of the poor, who, of course, are not private persons at all in his contemplation.

to possess, there was in Judæa a Baptist prophet who had the hardihood to denounce to his face the private vices of a cruel ruler. Still more remarkable and to the point, a Galilean peasant in scathing torrents was bespeaking woe on the religious leaders, who sat in the seat of the law-giver, for their insincerity and formalism; calling them unmistakably blind leaders of the blind; and telling those voluntarily placed in authority, "Ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers." What a gospel for the society-ridden member of the herd to-day, following at the heels of the leader who bids him sink his own advantage and individuality in the interests of his society, could the member but realise all that this means. It is the spirit of philosophy and doctrine which produces such denunciations that works out an evolution of race fit to rule the world. No machine-made social efficiency can enable a race to climb upwards: not the burden of society on the individual, but the unquenchable spirit of freedom in thought and word and deed: of individual liberty. It is not merely racial efficiency. The

same essential spirit and philosophy learnt in its loftiest themes from the lips of that Galilean peasant, that Jewish Messiah, has set the world ablaze ; touching the various races with the fire of freedom. As Christianity it has spread itself across two hemispheres carrying its possessors always to the front in the evolution of mankind, provided their possession was in spirit and in truth. " The increase of social efficiency and the increasing burden which society lays on the individual " may do for insects but not for men.

The social efficiency was with Rome : the future was with a small people within its empire whose proudest city the Roman legions would reduce to a desolate ruin. I know the argument with regard to religion as a determining factor, and will have more to say on it presently, when I come for instance to the defeat of a great nation, nominally Christian, by a nation hitherto regarded as heathen, whose religion is not even deistic. But what is clearly distinguishable, if we look, is that the socially inefficient, the race which could not be caked into a mass, the ever fragmentary units which loosely held themselves together, were to surpass in

their evolution the most socially efficient nation the world has ever known. For the reader will have gradually realised that socially efficient means perfectly disciplined, and the discipline of the Roman soldier is still and ever will be proverbial. All this is distinguishable with regard to the Jewish race itself, the nation and the religion apart altogether from the Christianity which came from it and had its own marvellous results.

Let us, however, notice here before proceeding further the nature of that movement as it affects the question before us. Its birth has been described in majestic phrases and we are offered the theory that its greatness consisted in the way in which its votaries sacrificed themselves to its social or religious unity. But the theory is palpably unsound. It would be no proof of the virtue of Christianity and no explanation of its success even if the theory were sound. Many a bad and vicious idea has had its slaves: sacrifices have been offered and tortures endured at the bidding of corrupt and degrading religions. And if degrees of sacrifice are to be counted as turning the scale then there will be difficulty in adjusting the

balance compared with many a religionist whose creed we should call not only degrading but perhaps even loathsome and disgusting. But Christianity did not demand the sacrifices to be made to the religion. The voluntariness and freedom was the virtue of it; not that the contagion of its example and fire was a demand for sacrifice. That sacrifice, indeed, its teachers said, had been made once for all. The spirit of martyrdom was a heavenly selfishness refusing to give up the faith, love, joy and hope, which had become dearer than life. It was very largely a defiance of human authority.

Indeed, Christianity itself is a further protest against the social efficiency we are considering: it is an additional incentive to and exhibition of liberty. Not that all which calls itself Christianity can claim this distinction. There is always the opposite tendency to be combatted. But that is not Christianity, though it may usurp the name. And to understand the true inwardness of the joyful sacrifice which the Christians made of themselves we must anticipate the essential distinction (which we shall have hereafter to draw and emphasise) between the burden which

society lays on the individual and the burden which the individual himself takes up of his own free will. Social efficiency claimed to dictate the religious doctrines and worship of its subjects. The Christian chose his own religion, and persisting in it accepted its burden cheerfully, though it meant death by the claws and teeth of savage beasts or being burnt as a human torch.

But it was not only as Christian against pagan that he had to do this. All along he did the same thing, even against nominal Christianity. Society laid on the individual the burden of creeds and forms under the name of Christianity which, though a Christian, he could not accept. He took upon himself what (apart from the spirit of liberty and a very vital religion) must have been regarded as a much greater burden choosing the torture and the stake. That and not the social efficiency was the true Christianity. If any one doubts by which way social evolution has come let him consider, whether the nations who adopted the social efficiency, and the increasing burden of society on the individual with regard to their religion, have or have not by that

means surpassed the people who retained their freedom under their religion.

The Anglo-Saxon race occupies the proud position which one need not be afraid to mention because in the past it would not consent to become socially efficient as part of a machine. The founding of new states by its members in search of religious liberty and to escape tyranny was part of its evolution because it was consistent with its freedom. The condition of its evolution was its spirit of liberty. And within the sphere of Christianity itself the real evolution, the true progress, has not only in this race but in others always followed the direction of individual free will. It is nothing less than absurd to say, as has been said with so much approval, that there is no rational sanction for progress. Religion itself if put upon the individual by way of a burden is a hindrance to his progress. That is rational enough. If the individual takes it upon himself it is not part of the weight but part of the motive power: it is not a minus sign but a plus designation: it ceases to be a hindrance and becomes a help; it gives him strength instead of depressing him with a burden. That is

surely reasonable. There is nothing mysterious about it. And there is no other condition of progress: no other possibility of evolution for mankind.

The idea that Christianity in any of its forms is the one condition of progress has recently received a rude shock. But it has not disturbed the rational doctrine that freedom is an indispensable base. And Christianity is the highest religion because it is the most consonant with liberty: because it is not consistent with the negation of freedom: it most of all tends to the free and unforced uplifting of what without it might seem a burden. Its virtue is that it is good for the individual: its efficacy is that it recognises the overwhelming importance of the individual and his needs: its truth in a social aspect is that it regards society as existing for the benefit of the individual. Thus has it assisted mankind. In the progressive nations and periods this has been its invariable characteristic.

The damning and damnable doctrine that the individual exists for the benefit and maintenance of the community or state, and must be treated or maltreated accordingly, has from time to time

appeared only to be swept away before the next wave of progress. It has recently been imported into this land of freedom and attained considerable popularity, but it is after all only the doctrine of a few who have pushed to the front. It has to go—or something more worthy of attainment will go.

With that we must leave the idea of social evolution, and notice specifically the two results which are alleged to have accompanied social evolution amongst insects. These results are said to be the increase of social efficiency and the increasing burden which society lays on the individual. And the inference we gather is that such is the social evolution of the human race. We have noticed the end of that sort of evolution and have contrasted it with the evolution which does not terminate in the downfall of the race involved. Let us examine the nature and cause of it, and also of another sort of efficiency than this social efficiency by laying on of burdens—an efficiency less social perhaps but more effective.

To reach this we had better begin with the burden which society lays on the individual; for the social efficiency can

only be understood by reference to it. And first we must inquire who and what is society? The pure theorist would doubtless say that society means everybody. But the fashionable crowd which fills a London drawing-room would correct him in that error. They would tell him that society means only those who can get within the circle—without are dogs and others. That is also the answer which a social philosopher who paid close attention to the facts of the case would give him with regard to society in another aspect; as spoken of by those who set society against the individual.

Society, when its rights are in question, stands for all the people. Society, when its benefits are discussed, indicates those who can live on the common funds of the people. Society, when its obligations are considered, means nobody. Theoretically, society represents the sum of all the individuals. Practically, society consists of the government and its dependants, or beneficiaries. And this is all that it includes even when the government happens to be that of some voluntary organisation. From all which it follows

that the laying of a burden on the individual by society is taking that which belongs to all and giving the benefit of it to some. It is creating a favoured class at the expense of those who are outside it. It is putting the maintenance of a section of mankind on the shoulders of the remainder. This can be endured to a limited extent. To some extent it may be admitted it is even necessary. What matters is the increasing burden; for it may become too heavy. What most staggers our minds is that this increasing burden should be put forward as a sign and cause of the progress of mankind.

Much is made of the theory that society is more than the sum of its units. The meaning of this much-worn dictum so far as it is true is that the contact of individuals with each other is a help to all. Indeed, as we shall see in another chapter, the communion helps to furnish motives for increased activity and advancement. In that sense society is something more than the aggregate of the individuals. But is that a reason why the government should take away all the advantage of the communion and lay burdens on the

individuals who maintain it? After all, society is only the aggregate of the individuals plus contact, just as red hot iron is only iron plus heat. In neither case is there anything left if you take away the units or the iron. Wherein consists the benefit if the burden of society is to be deliberately increased so as to equal or exceed its advantages? Because the condition of their being in society is helpful to individuals, are we to seek means of taking away for a favoured class the benefit of their communion? Surely that is not to be offered as a help to progress. To increase the load instead of the motive is to retard and not assist the progress.

The burden, as against the help, of society is, however, a subject opening to our view so much that is of importance with regard to social and all other efficiency that it shall have separate treatment in another chapter.

CHAPTER IV.

Power and Load.

THE natural advantage of human communion in the real advancement of the race is to furnish increased motives. To take those motives away by depriving the units of their advantages, for the benefit of any particular section whatever, is to destroy the advantage of the communion and something more.

It is not only in the subtraction of material advantage and substance that the danger of taking away the motives consists. Much depends on the exercise of the will in all action. And the subservience of the individual will, as well as the subordination of the individual good, is a subtraction from the strength of the motive. (Most men,) and particularly the best men, will choose poverty with freedom rather than wealth without it. But if to that be added, as despite statements to the contrary may be added, a tendency

to increase in the most widely diffused wealth under a condition of freedom then there is a double motive against interference.

Our concern in this chapter, however, shall not be with the individual's love of freedom or with his desire for comfort. Still less shall it be with his hankering after rest and ease; which is perhaps the negation of a motive, though his freedom to enjoy it at his own will and not at the dictation of another is beneficial to him and the race. We will address ourselves to his efficiency, and not only as a unit but as a combining force. It will be unfortunate if we find that his efficiency depends on the prevalence of the opposite of all these motives. Efficiency which can only be had by running counter to all that moves the individual must obviously be difficult to attain. Indeed, it is even more difficult to imagine such a condition to be at all possible. But we must see the facts as they are and draw no conclusions which are not consonant with those facts.

The first point to be realised is that if anything whatever is to be accomplished the motive power must influence those

who are to accomplish it. A motive power which acts merely on society or the community acts on nothing, for the society or community without the individual is nothing. It is like the heat without the iron, or other substance in which it is found; it is only in the imagination. And when one aims his efforts at society instead of at the individual, it is like endeavouring through concussion to get up or maintain heat in a substance by aiming at the blaze above it; or where the blaze should be.

But the increase of social efficiency by increasing the burden which society lays on the individual is even more absurd. For if the motive power is to be got into all the units concerned it is very clear that putting an extra burden on them will demand additional motive power to overcome the dead weight. It is not merely missing the right aim, it is setting up a counteracting influence. For if even we could admit that all the motive power is in society (in the sense of the communion of individuals) and none in the individuals themselves we should still have to face the fact that the motion must be got into the individuals before they do anything.

No work for which the machinery is run is done by the engine until the motive power has overcome the dead weight of the machinery itself. The motion must be got into the machinery; and that takes some of the available power, before any grinding or other valuable work is accomplished.

If, however, the engine is a hindrance and a burden, no power in it for turning wheels, but a heavy brake to be dragged along by the machinery, it were better to uncouple it. We can find no better simile for describing the seeking of social efficiency by the increase of the burden of society on the individual. Such a simile is much superior to the analogy with social insects. For we do at least understand to some extent the location of the motive power in the engines and machinery we make ourselves.

If on the other hand we go to Mr. Edison with his knowledge of Nature's forces, and his ideas how to use them, we may get something more useful for our purpose than anything we can learn from ants and bees. When for instance he has got his society moving in the form of huge grinding machinery for crushing iron-producing

rocks, he makes use of natural motive power likely to keep his society moving despite the fact that it is doing work all the time. He lets the heavy masses into the whirling machine at the top. And as Nature has decreed that heavy masses like to go downwards toward the centre of the earth, these masses crash through his wheels literally breaking and grinding themselves into a useful substance and form. Here is efficiency where the burden does the work, since it contains a motive power. But if he expected those ironstone rocks to come upwards he would be—a social philosopher.

Apart, however, from society constituting itself a burden and acting as a brake, it is at best a portion of the dead weight to be carried even if the communion for which it stands supplies motive power. The government may be a help if rightly managed and kept within the limits consistent with the advantage of the individuals; which limits are, speaking generally, the narrowest. But it cannot be a help without being a burden, for it must always cost substance for its maintenance. So that society in this sense must take constant care lest its own inertia and

hindrance should amount to more than the motive force which it adds by combination to that of the units separately.

Much of the motive, however, is apart altogether from even the aggregation of units or any direct or indirect effect of the communion. The individual must eat if he is to live, even if he is absolutely alone. And we have dwelt already on the importance to him of the supply of his primary needs. His being congregated with others into towns and cities does indeed add to his wants and to his motives, though whether in these conditions his primary needs are on the whole better supplied may be open to question.

Certainly there is more luxury and wealth, but also deeper poverty. Though luxury and penury may be found side by side in many a picturesque village and hamlet in every long settled country. Whether also the congregating in large masses increases efficiency in its best senses may perhaps be doubted. The talking is, it is true, chiefly done there. But the thinking is chiefly done elsewhere.

Whether in combination or separately, however, the motive power must obviously

be in the individuals themselves, or be got into them if they are to move. Indeed, the whole of the motive power resides in the individuals, though some of it may be called forth only by the combination we call society. The co-operation undoubtedly admits of possibilities which do not exist without it. The competition is at once the sign, the condition, and the cause, of progress. But prior to these conditions of society must be placed, as motives, certain conditions and instincts which partake more of the nature of individual motives, though not entirely self-regarding.

Food and bodily sustenance the unit must have or die, and he will ask for little more until he has obtained comfort of that kind. Following that, however, his first motives taken on the average of adult mankind will be towards family life. Marriage and offspring are only less elemental than the craving for necessary sustenance. And when sociologists in an effort to place the apex of the pyramid downwards strive to show that the individual is not the unit of mankind, there is a modicum of truth in their favour, though it is misplaced.

That the unit of mankind is any conceivable society is a flat contradiction of natural facts. But though the unit is very clearly the individual, such a statement must be qualified by the realisation that the family can only at furthest be regarded as a sub-unit. For without the family in the sense of mate and offspring the race must soon die; so that in a secondary sense perhaps the family is itself the unit of mankind.

These are very elementary considerations; but they are very greatly neglected and misunderstood by modern learned and political society which has somehow got to the end of the book first, and being concerned with combinations and permutations has nothing but loathing and scorn for the simple rules of addition and subtraction.

Yet these elementary considerations have a bearing of the utmost importance on the question of efficiency and its increase as well as on the justice and liberty accorded to the individual and the supply of material well being for the race. If we regard the family of man, woman and child (or children) in its true aspect as a unit of society we realise the close

correspondence between the family and the individual. If we disregard the relationship we ignore the facts and bring our thought into chaos. For the family is no more identical with society than the individual is identical with society. And the human relationship by which the race is perpetuated must be clearly recognised for several good reasons.

The increase in number of those for whom material provision must be made is palpably a question for the consideration of the individuals. Society quite obviously cannot provide for them. For it was no mere jest we uttered in the previous chapter when it was remarked that when its obligations are discussed society means nobody. We might perhaps have said that when its substance is considered society means nobody, and when its obligations are discussed it means all others than the government and its dependants. But that would, in verbal appearance at least, have involved us in two logical contradictions. For government and its beneficiaries would have been society (for benefits), and not society (for obligations) at one and the same time.

And all others than government would have been society (for obligations), and not society (for advantages) in similar fashion.

So that we are compelled to retain as individuals all those outside the government and its dependants if we would give any meaning at all to our language. Society, when we consider its obligations, we must remember means nobody. It cannot, therefore, provide for the increased number. Its function is palpably to lay on burdens and not to bear them. If it can give additional motive force to enable the burdens it has added to be borne without increased difficulty no more can be asked of it.

And if those outside government and its dependants are still retained as individuals in our conceptions it is beyond doubt that the burden of the children, whose addition increases the number to be provided for, must be borne by the individuals. The only possible question is whether the burden is to be borne by the individuals who bring these children into the world or by other individuals. Justice might have to say something on the point. But we are discussing efficiency

which somehow in these days is regarded as much more important.

We defer for the moment the fixing of responsibility. That may involve complicated considerations since it is a question of ethical theory and not of fact. The simple and obvious suggestion would be that parents bringing children into the world being responsible for the existence of these children are responsible also for their maintenance and education. But there has lately been a recrudescence of the theory that society is responsible not only for the education but also for the feeding of all the children.

What society means when we discuss its responsibility for the maintenance of children is, as already seen, that portion of the individuals who ultimately pay the rates and taxes and bear the expense of government. And the question of responsibility is as between them in their capacity of rate and tax payers, regardless of their having or not having brought children into the world, on the one hand, and the actual parents of the children on the other hand.

The facts bearing on the subject are: (1) that the establishment of a family is an

act of will on the part of the individual ; (2) that parents have special regard for their own offspring and in a normal and healthy condition take pleasure in caring for them ; (3) that like produces like ; (4) that favourable conditions for growth of individuals and the due exercise of their faculties tend, and are essential to, the efficiency of the race.

These propositions will not be controverted, but an attempt to show more clearly what is involved in them will not be wasted. For these are only the bare facts which can be established by palpable evidence or are accepted already as established. The qualifications which may be suggested do not weaken their strength as arguments. There are other facts equally certain though not equally palpable which go to confirm the same conclusions. But these will suffice to give some definite result to our inquiry.

It is not here assumed that a shortage of food is a necessary condition of progress and increased efficiency as some have seemed to indicate. Indeed one would rather be inclined to suggest on the contrary that there must be an abundance of subsistence within reach of the effort

which is itself one of the favourable conditions mentioned in our last fact. The tendency to increase beyond the means of a comfortable livelihood which has been put forth as essential to evolution is capable of being regarded from diametrically opposite points of view. If it means the crowding together fighting for a very limited supply of necessary eatables (especially if artificially limited) one may well ask to be excused from believing that such a state is in the path of upward progress or evolution. It is doubtless true that the real progress of the race demands that the future race should be the offspring on the average of the best of the existing members. Nature herself will do something towards securing that. Whether we can do anything to secure it by fighting against Nature is a very vital question. The tendency to increase beyond the means of subsistence is palpably an indication as well as a cause of progress. But there is all the difference that exists between good and evil, between the tendency to increase beyond the means of subsistence and any possible tendency to reduce the means of subsistence below the needs of the race. The latter is the

notion which many seem to get of the struggle for existence; the struggle for a deliberately limited or decreasing supply.

The tendency to increase beyond the means of subsistence is both natural and rational. It indicates life, health, strength, activity. It exhibits itself in extending its frontiers: in reaching out to the front. A restriction of that condition, either in respect of population itself or in respect of its subsistence, is not only unnatural but painful: it not only renders progress impossible but militates against present pleasure. It has been the usual reply to socialists that their theories are contrary to the advancement of mankind, an advancement which depends on a condition of competition and struggle: of endeavour and straining after something. That is less than half the truth. Their system is among other objections very painful for those now living.

In the freedom to bound forward the race will go to the limits of its subsistence. That is its pleasure, its welfare, and its hope of progress. It is not at all the same thing as having the subsistence cut down to its present limits, or the taking hold of all the subsistence and distributing

it after the government's own notions of justice—whether those notions are wise or foolish. In all cases of the pressure which is now observable (and without assertion it may be suggested always will be) the great question is from which side does the pressure come—the vigour of life or the scantiness of the provision for it? Naturalists have perhaps not emphasised this point. But there seems nothing in all their facts or arguments contrary to it. It is only in the case of the pseudo science which attempts to apply their theories to human society that the essential difference there become so important is so utterly ignored. In that department it is ignored by all sections and the "devil-take-the-hindmost" theory is denounced by some, upheld by others, as the only possible condition of progress, and by still others ingeniously crawled round with many contortions of mind. None of them seem to realise that it is not a "devil-take-the-hindmost-theory" at all, but a heaven-bless-the-foremost theory. The unfortunate consequences of this failure to understand whether the train is moving one way or the telegraph poles are flying the other way are exhibited differently in the

three cases just mentioned. The first section tries to hold back the foremost, thinking that will advance the hindmost. The second section is under no such delusion about advancing the hindmost, but under the impression that the hindmost must be hindmost, are willing to mitigate their lot by conceding the requests of the first section as they would throw to a dog a bone. They are under no notion that what they give will hurt themselves, and believing in the struggle for existence as essential to progress, despite its denial and denunciation by the first section, they are in truth little concerned whether it will ease the lot of the lowest or not. The third section believe in the struggle for existence as something which should not be eased lest the race be injured, but imagine that it is made more vigorous by the chains put upon the competitors. They thus approve the actions of those who try to fight against Nature though on altogether different grounds.

The total result of all this is a confusion which is only faintly represented by the foregoing remarks. What needs to be understood and realised is that the foundation doctrine of which these very various

views are taken is altogether untrue. If it were true that the progress of the race depends on its difficulty and distress, its strength on its starvation, we should indeed have a most awkward position to face. But if the struggle of which we hear so much is Nature's own, entirely beyond our control, being no other than the energy of life, the problem is simplified. We know then that all we have to do is to free it from hindrances, oil the wheels if we can, and take off friction: for the power is something freely given to us. That indeed accords with an old economic theory which has an important bearing in several directions. The theory is that all we can do to assist Nature in her production of subsistence is to move the different objects. We cannot produce anything whatever. But we can so move the soil and the seed that Nature will produce us a crop. So it is also with all other of our efforts and productions. In exactly the same way all we can do with regard to ourselves as individuals and as a race is to find the most favourable conditions. Nature will supply the struggle by the life that is in us, as she supplies the sub-

sistence by the life that is in the plant we have sown.

These general qualifications have carried us far from the four facts with which we started, concerning the reproduction and progress of the race; not, let us hope, without helping us to realise the bearing of those four facts on the question before us. We may see now that the individual, if healthy in body and mind, establishes his family and cares for his children in pursuance of his own pleasure and gratification. There is no need to add them as a burden on him. All that he needs is that he should be set free to take the burden on himself and bear it without restriction. This is the natural inference from our first two facts. That like produces like is a biological fact of general application, but its qualifications or exceptions constitute its importance to us. The like produced will be slightly different for better or worse from the like producing. The difference is very slight indeed on the average. But in the course of years (perhaps fewer than is generally admitted) it involves advancement or deterioration. And the favourable conditions of our fourth fact have much to do with deter-

mining the tendency to the one or the other.

What we have seen so far, however, is that it is no part of our business to add to the difficulties as a means of creating more favourable conditions. The increase of the load does not make for progress. It is the increase of the motive power which does that. If the load and the motive power are in one and the same object then, as in Edison's grinding machinery, the load may drive the machinery. But that is a sort of load which society cannot lay upon the individual. It must be taken up by the individual himself. It must give him pleasure. It must contain an attraction for him. We have instanced children. We have more than hinted that with an individual properly and healthily constituted in body and mind such a load taken on by the individual himself is a motive power. But it is quite the reverse if he finds the load put on him by a power outside himself and against his inclination. This is only one instance of the working of this fundamental factor.

Exactly the same applies to the individual's supply of subsistence, either for

his own consumption or to be given to another in exchange for what he desires for himself. We shall see as we proceed that there is no variation in principle when we come to the considerations affecting the individual in his relationship with a wider circle than that of the family. When, also, we regard him in the highest aspects in which we can think of him we shall find contrary to the much discussed and favoured theory that the doctrine is unchangeably true. We should be left in a deplorable condition of philosophy or no philosophy: a veritable morass of uncertainty; if it could be otherwise. We could never know when we had enough brake force on our machine. It is simple and easy to understand when we learn that none of our braking is required.

Nor is it any concern of ours in governing to bring the individual into the rivalry of the race. He gets there when he first acquires life. It is not for us to attempt any methods of increasing the competitive energy of the weaker of the race. Nature has given them such energy as she intends them to use. One economist at least (J. A. Walker) imagined that trade combinations were intended to increase the

competition of their members. In that he was hopelessly astray. Their whole programme is made to diminish the competition, even though it is done at the expense of preventing the members from earning what is offered to them and thus causing them poverty and distress. But if he had been right in his conception of the function of these organisations, the favour he bestowed on them would still be misplaced. No artificial stimulus is wanted to force the energies. That does not make for either pleasure or progress. Nature combines the motive and the burden, and does so in better proportions than we can hope to reach, let alone improve upon.

More particularly what we have seen concerning the struggle for existence of which we have heard so much is that Nature and life establish the struggle: it is merely life's own energy. For us to imagine we have to find conditions in which the struggle must be made more strenuous by creating an additional burden to be put on the strugglers is not describable. The strugglers will, because they have the life, take up burdens of themselves, and all we have to do is to see that

they have liberty to bear their own burdens, which carry motive power with them, and not put burdens on of our devising. The struggle we try artificially to create hinders progress. The easing of the struggle for some by putting it on others is equally restrictive. Nothing but freedom can help us, freedom of the individual to live his own life. Freedom alone is justice. Freedom alone is equality of opportunity. And Nature's own competition, the energy of life, on terms of freedom, that is free competition, is the most effective plan of producing that abundance of subsistence which is the most favourable condition of life. The struggle will go on if we take away the hindrances and the motion will be forward. We must oil the wheels, not clog or brake them, if we would have efficiency and happiness.

CHAPTER V.

Increase of Efficiency.

In the previous chapter we were led to point out the error of supposing that the difficulties made the progress. We had to emphasise this greatly because so many have imagined evolution was the result of adverse conditions. The struggle which results from life they have thought to be more successful the less favourable the environment. It need hardly be said that scope and inducement to exercise their faculties must be regarded as the most favourable conditions to the best evolution of mankind. But it is no part of such conditions that the result of this exercise should be failure to accomplish the purpose in view. It is not the stinted diet but the healthy appetite by which we may hope to grow and get strong.

With all the arguments that are possible as to whether acquired characteristics are transmitted or not it will be difficult to

convince a reasonable person that strong children are on the average more likely to be born of weak parents than of strong ones. And it will be equally difficult to spread the doctrine that reducing or limiting the supply of food will distribute strength. Though it will be long before all are convinced that the most free and abundant production is the most certain and easy way to attain plentiful distribution. There are reasons for this prejudice which we pass by for the present.

But in the previous chapter we confined ourselves to pointing out the source and locality of the motive power, and the advantages of allowing the power to move in the direction it was desired the load should be carried. In other words, the load should, if possible, supply its own motive power as, so far as we noticed, it did under free and natural conditions. Particularly we referred to the family.

Much remains to be said, however, on that subject, and whether acquired characteristics are transmitted or not it has never been doubted that it is well to have progeny from the best stock and not the worst. Such a doctrine has not, however, been applied to the conditions of human

society. At best it has been argued, and that by very few, that natural conditions alone are progressive. There has scarcely been any attempt to find and establish natural conditions of human society.

In discussing the subject we spoke of the elementary considerations. So they seemed, despite the more complicated questions to which they opened the way. But even a long division sum may be too serious a proposition for those who began at permutations and combinations without learning multiplication and subtraction. And there has recently been much discussion of physical degeneration and mental weakness as problems difficult of solution; together with decreasing marriage and birth rate, and similar social phenomena. Needless to say, the facts have been disputed and explained away by those to whom if they had been true they seemed likely to be inconvenient. And really we do not mind for our argument whether these deplorable tendencies exist or not. If the conditions which are clearly undeniable are likely to produce these undesirable consequences we shall be difficult to persuade that they do not exist even if we cannot clearly distinguish

them in the statistics or other evidence available. If on the contrary the conditions we have to notice are all that can be wished in their probable results, we should attribute the evil effects to some other cause still undiscovered.

Admitting that like produces like, we have no alternative but to conclude that for the race, the future individuals and society in any reasonable sense, the marriage of the best is most desirable. The marriage of the weakest and worst is for the same reason least desirable. To many minds a laborious and stringent system of restriction would be the suggested preventive against the latter. But they forget that Nature herself is a discriminating judge on these matters. Indeed, they deny it and set up their own wisdom as greatly superior—not having wisdom enough to avoid the conditions which tend to encourage the marriage of the least fit and discourage that of the better equipped.

To understand this it is essential to obtain a rational notion of a doctrine which is chiefly used irrationally. Long ago a doctrine of human population was established to the effect that it tended to increase beyond the limits of subsistence:

but as it could not go beyond those limits, it would increase to an extent which would reduce wages of labourers to a bare subsistence. With the purely economic question contained in the last clause we will not deal at present.* The increase of population we may leave with the suggestion already made that if it springs from overflow of life it is good and tends to both happiness and progress. What, according to the theory mentioned, the wages affording bare subsistence amounted to could, however, most palpably not be predetermined. And the explanation was further supplied that it would be determined by the standard of comfort to which the labourers had grown accustomed.

Now, as an explanation or determinant of the rate of wages such a theory as the standard of comfort theory is a very mischievous inversion re-calling Adam Smith's memorable words: "It is not because one man keeps a coach while his neighbour walks afoot that the one is rich and the other poor: but because the one is rich he keeps a coach, and because the other is poor he walks afoot."

It is the prevailing fashion of writers to

* See "Economics and Socialism," chap. xii.

import this standard of comfort doctrine into their discussions in a peculiar fashion, and to advocate its being raised as a means of raising wages. But that only indicates the prevailing ignorance of the writers. The least mischievous effect of the theory may be illustrated by reference to the experience of those who going upstairs in the dark imagine there is a step higher than the top landing and feel something like a shock when they step on what is not there. A more common and mischievous result is better exemplified by the fable of the dog snatching at a shadow and losing the substance.

But the theory is not without its application if rightly interpreted. It is a sorry remedy for lack of wages that one may avoid increasing the population until they are more freely offered. Still, there are conditions deterrent of marriage in every grade of society varying with the grade and the individual. What really matters as a theory to be borne in mind is that the weakest, the most unfit, the most improvident, the least industrious, those whose standard of life and comfort is lowest, will be just the class who will enter upon the married state with the

least prospect of due provision for their offspring. Their standard of comfort permits them to marry with greatest indifference to the welfare of their children. A raised standard of comfort will not raise the wages. That depends on a supply of wages, whether it be in the shape of money or in the form of consumable commodities. But a standard of comfort operating on the mind of the individual will tend to hold the individual back from matrimony unless there is a prospect of maintaining the standard.

If, therefore, a government is at pains to increase the burden of society upon the individual, by increasing the taxation it levies on the industrious in order to make more abundant provision for any children that happen to be born of poor parents: it is safe to conclude that the burden will act as a deterrent against the marriage of those individuals who most fear the effects of the burden. These will, in the first place, clearly be those who are to the greatest degree influenced by the danger of falling below a standard of maintenance which they regard as a minimum. They are, as we have seen, just the individuals whose marriage is more desirable than

that of weaker members of the race. The weaker and inferior, the improvident and shiftless, are indifferent to these considerations, and marry. The stronger and better are moved by them and refrain. The conclusion need not be stated in words.

But that is not all. The stronger ones most influenced by these prospects are those who employ and supervise the labour of the weaker ones. Let us say they exploit labour without comment or expression of opinion on what is implied in the exploiting. Their children would expect to continue the same sort of work and not to fall into the ranks of labourers for time or piece wages in the ordinary sense. So that on similar grounds, connected with the standard of subsistence, we find cause of reduction in the number of employers, distinct from the diminished temptation to become employers from the increasing penalties on doing so.

To those who imagine that the only true and beneficial organisation of labour is the combination of labourers to do as little as possible for the wages, it may seem quite desirable to reduce the number of this employing class. Whether that is the case we are not discussing at present.

To reduce the number of employers does not seem to afford greater hope of forcing up the prices of hired labour. But to those who are out of work and in dire need of subsistence, or even in danger of that condition, a better supply of exploiters is the one thing to be wished for. The person exploiting doubtless expects a profit on his exploiting. That is the reward for his services. But some people expect a reward for hindering the exploiting or application of industry. It is more reasonable to expect benefit and wages from the application of industry to an object than for a reversal of the process. And the decrease of those able and willing to connect labour with its ends and purposes is certainly not conducive to the offer of either employment or wages.

So that we have an ever accumulating disadvantage in putting burdens on the individual in the hope of thereby improving the race or increasing efficiency. The individual is quite willing to take his own burdens for his own pleasure and count them not burdens but blessings. The more this is the case the more fit he is for parentage, the less so the less fit.

But this refers to his actually bearing the burden and not to his creating burdens to be thrown on others. From a racial point of view the greater his fitness for parentage, the more he is able and willing to bear its burdens. But in proportion to his highest fitness he is unwilling to create burdens he cannot bear. On the other hand, if he is less fit racially he is as a rule not only less able to bear those burdens but much more ready to throw them on society or any one else. He is frequently indifferent to their existence as though he were by no means responsible for them. And if inability or unwillingness to bear the burden of parentage is to be regarded as a reason for relieving the parent of the responsibility and putting the responsibility on society, it is very sure that the race will be perpetuated from the worst specimens and not the best. When children are spoken of indiscriminately as a national asset little regard is paid to the fact that every such asset involves a debt which may leave the balance on the wrong side. It is not by every child that the race is improved. Such a thing cannot be. The utmost we can hope for is an improvement on the

average. To disregard the conditions and responsibility of parentage will not secure even as much as that.

Society has just been used in a sense we have previously disallowed, and even having so used it must still disallow. Responsibility put on society will not be sustained. In that sense we have made it clear society is nobody. Government bears no burdens. It is itself a burden to be borne. The burden falls on another set of individuals than those whose burden is included in that of government. And this set of individuals are just those from whom it is important the future race should spring. Putting this burden on them deters them out of regard to their standard of subsistence from undertaking the burden of parentage. It also deters them from undertaking the management and application of the nation's industry. Having no responsibility which can operate as a motive with them they are the less anxious to undertake any corresponding burden on the industrial side. They probably get themselves appointed as officials, or invest their capital money in the public debt by which the individuals are burdened instead of in productive

enterprise. And their not undertaking the burden of parentage or enterprise involves yet another subtraction from national efficiency in the fact of their not putting children into positions of responsible management as employers or exploiters of labour.

These are abstractions. They are generalised statements. It would be infinitely difficult to prove them from statistics. But few would doubt that they truly represent observed tendencies. They are capable of proof by the process of bringing them to the test of known human motives. And they show the terrible mischief likely to result from society, the state, or the community, making itself a burden on the individual for the support of government and its dependants.

How do these abstractions agree with the facts? Reference has been made to the outcry concerning physical degeneration and the complaint of a falling marriage rate and a decreasing birth rate. The diminished tendencies to reproduce, it has been stated, are most noticeable among the middle classes. Now these are the classes who push forward if we take them in a sufficiently comprehensive sense

and include "upper working classes." The upper classes of all have no need to push. The lowest classes are too feeble to do so.

It was natural that the statistics should be denied or explained away. But without going into the statistics our abstractions would lead us to believe that given conditions in which the state had made itself a burden these results would be likely to follow. Whether or not the statistics are forthcoming to prove it, there can be no doubt that a falling birth rate among the classes bearing the burden of government and an increasing birth rate among the classes dependent on government may be assumed as the effect of increasing the burden of society on the individual. If the statistics do not show such results they are probably incomplete. If they do no one has a right to be surprised. While to pretend the statistics proved that to increase the state burden would result in the parentage of the best and reducing the birth rate of the inferior would be at once written down as impossible nonsense.

Are we, then, it may be asked, to return to a condition of ruthless savagery, in

which every man is allowed to fight for his own hand regardless of the suffering and poverty his competition causes to others? This is the language of the times and foolish language it is. It is bad economics and it is bad philosophy. Its only virtue is its picturesque eloquence, and that is so misplaced as to be a vice. It so happens that since his competition is to supply an increased quantity of the subsistence he produces in order to meet the demands of those who need to consume his competition cannot cause poverty. The only danger is lest his want of competition or idleness, whether willing or enforced, should result in insufficient production; lest the subsistence should fail to reach the poorest at a price low enough for their means. The mischief of this sort of language, moreover, is that it substitutes words for ideas and a loud voice for sound argument. Nor is it impossible to meet it by equally well chosen language of abuse could the advocates of freedom bring themselves to the same ideals of controversy. For the crafty serpent-like scheming which embraces in its toils and crushes out the life is not better than free and manly savagery.

We spoke of the theory of heaven-bless-the-foremost as against that of devil-take-the-hindmost. Doubtless there are those who would regard this as an objectionable doctrine still. And they would suggest that we must have a heaven-bless-the-hindmost theory. To which with all our heart we are agreed. And we see blessing in space and freedom for these hindmost to use all the strength that has been given them and get a share for such help as they can give with freedom for all. They will fare better by helping the stronger and more skilled than by insisting that they will only co-operate in a position they are unable to fill. But what sort of a progress can be expected from a devil-stop-the-foremost doctrine? Move we must. Life ordains it. To improve the progress and its comfort, freedom is denounced by the supporters of the opposite doctrines as ruthless savagery to be put an end to by stopping the foremost in the race.

In the Indian Mutiny there was a celebrated Black Hole of Calcutta into which a great many more people were thrust than could find air to breathe. Who was guilty of the most ruthless

savagery, those who thrust the poor wretches into the hole or those in the hole who struggled for a breath of the vital air? This is in essence exactly what we have to deal with in the case before us. There are differences in the circumstances. The scale is larger: the process is slower; the deprivation is of food as well as of air; it is done with less open brutality, indeed, largely in ignorance and thoughtlessness or denseness of mind. But it is not the less deplorable for all that. Nor is it more desirable because it professes to be done for the benefit of the weaker of the race.

The stronger push themselves to the front to get out of the black hole, and if free they get out, leaving at least more air and space for the others. And these philosophers thrust them back in horror at their ruthless savagery in trying to get out in that way. This is no warped view of the matter. But the thrusting back is called the burden of society on the individual. The exact methods we shall glance at later; the contrivances and methods of taxation by which the land is monopolised, untaxed so long as it is unused, thrusting the mass of the people into an

uncomfortably small space; the schemes by which taxes are increased and become a burden on production that a few may enjoy lives of excessive ease or luxury or the incompetent may receive more than they have earned: the subtle means of extracting the produce of the national industry by creating a huge public debt, enabling a considerable number to live without producing out of the taxes from which the interest must be paid; and the plans adopted for maintaining a few to see that the many avoid overmuch competition. These, it must be confessed, are not methods to which the term ruthless savagery seems on the face of the matter appropriate. The means adopted appear rather to get the people into the black hole by insinuations or even assertions that the air is purer and more plentiful there than in the open.

When on the subject of the family and population in the last chapter, we particularly emphasised in the fourth fact that there should be favourable conditions for growth and due exercise of faculties. These we insist are essential to both happiness and progress. There is no contradiction between the conditions necessary

for these two desirable results. It has been a mistake too frequently made that happiness is a foe to progress. The truth is that progress is not increased by adverse conditions or mankind improved by wretchedness.

Let us at once admit that evolutionists have spoken of the tendency of living creatures to increase beyond the means of subsistence. We will not deny it. There is no need. It answers the purposes of our argument admirably. But this is when we realise that the condition of progress as of happiness is the bounding energy of life pressing outwards to the verge of its subsistence. This is what assists evolution and progress: not the narrowing and circumscribing of the condition pressing inwards on the life. It has not been made very clear by evolutionists dealing with the lower forms of life, but it is a point of the utmost importance in dealing with mankind. For it shows that any attempt to reduce what is termed the struggle for existence by restricting the life itself would be painful as well as opposed to progress: that narrowed conditions and stinted supply so

far from being the necessary conditions of progress are absolutely opposed to it.

On neither side, therefore, can liberty and the most abounding free competition be interfered with save on the certainty of suffering and decay. To put a barrier or burden on the individual for the good of society is to hurt the race by securing the conditions in which it will be continued by the weakest and worst instead of the strongest and best. To restrict liberty and hold back the strongest is to secure the worst conditions for all. So that when we are asked to consider the poor from motives of altruism, and permit society to make itself a burden for their sake, we are tempted to ask why this excessive anxiety on the part of a certain section to put a burden on us. We are even tempted to wonder whether the advocates of this method of loading the beast can be unconsciously influenced by the fact that they will themselves thereby get a ride. We should prefer that the altruism were more spontaneous on the part of those who seem anxious to force us to it and more obviously disinterested on their own part. That is a point to which we must come in the next chapter.

It is needless to say that very many advocate these erroneous doctrines actually to their own hurt, and those to whose remarks these pages are intended as a reply must from the nature of the case be advocating their views without conscious bias. It is not to them that the remarks just made apply at all. With those, however, who take up altruism as a profession to live by, we are entitled to look very closely into the alleged benefits of their exertions. We are doubly so entitled when the altruism out of which they live is put upon us by force at their instigation. Our study of motives does not extend to calling in question their good faith. The motives of mankind were not intended to be discussed in that aspect. But if we are to be altruistic without our consent we may at least ask whether we are being treated with justice.

If on the other hand we are told, as we are, that the matter is ruled by a majority, to which the minority must consent, we have a double answer: that in the first place tyranny and wrong is none the better for being brought about by a numerous throng against a solitary individual, and a mob has no more right to

rob one person than another unaided person has: while in the second place it is not advantageous for the mob all things considered. It is apt thereby to lose the best that would have been possible to it. For the highest efficiency is with the few.

It is argued that we have failed to show the disadvantages of which we hint. It is even said that the reason of our failing to show these disadvantages is to be found in our own feelings of altruism robbing us of the weapons of discussion which unalloyed reason would have afforded us. Our weapons may not have been perfectly fashioned or deftly handled. But that does not prove any effect of our altruism. It may only indicate a deficiency in our reasoning powers. Which is just what brings us to the whole discussion and the examination of this altruism-by-proxy-under-compulsion, or altruism at the expense of another who is despoiled for the purpose.

It is curious, however, to observe how easy it is to transpose and subvert an argument so as to reverse its whole operation. And when we deal in such expressions and ideas as society which is always being claimed or denounced by a fresh set

of people it is difficult to find words in which to express doctrines of permanent application. The advocates of liberty in the last century had to contend against a government which was obviously *by* a few and was in danger of being *for* an equally limited number. Indeed, there is always that danger, but it is not always equally apparent. At that time it was very manifest. The plain course, therefore, for an advocate of human rights as against government; the policy of the humanitarian against suffering and wrong, was to strive for the good of the great mass of people who were unrepresented in government. They declared that the object of government should be the greatest good of the greatest number. The phrase is used to-day on exactly the opposite side of the conflict to that for which it was invented. The greatest number have now obtained votes—but votes do not carry with them knowledge of political or economic science. Society in the guise of a government controlled and managed by the few was then regarded as that from which the greatest good of the greatest number had to be forced. Society in the guise of a government elected by the

votes of householders is now regarded as the embodiment of the mass of the people. And this phrase still claiming the protection of humanitarianism proceeds to serve its new master, the government, as it formerly served its originators who were against the government. It is a quite remarkable instance of the confiscation so common with governments of whatever they can get from the inventions and productions of individuals.

The phrase "greatest good of the greatest number" was an imperfect expression of what, properly understood, was really a sound theory. As so frequently happens, the expression has been made to mean what it was never intended to convey, and in the end has been used to support doctrines directly opposed to the original teaching. The greatest good of the greatest number rightly understood is the greatest good of all, and can only be secured by respecting what in defiance of present day doctrines and phraseology I venture to call the rights of every individual. Those who now have possession of the phrase have imagined that the greatest good of the greatest number might be reached by putting the burden of the

majority on the minority, which is another aspect of society laying a burden on the individual.

For years past there has been, for instance, an ever-growing inclination to put a burden on employers for the benefit as was imagined of the employed: the employed being considered to be the greatest number. The result has been that the employers on whom the burden was laid have gradually got from under and the load has come down crushing and grinding on the poorest and the weakest, which must always be the result in such cases. This result has actually come about and is to be seen by those who have eyes to see. But a house of talkers tumble over each other to add further burdens in the same fashion at the bidding of the strongest and most ignorant of their number. One does not pity the employers. They are able to take care of themselves, especially if they have warning in time to enable them to provide against and avoid the damage to themselves. One pities those for whom there will be no employers.

But while on the subject of efficiency we must not omit to notice that our Black

Hole of Calcutta illustration only represented half the truth. For, while some are thrust back, by which their efficiency is hindered of its growth and full effect, others are crushed by the thrusting back, so that their efficiency, at least, is destroyed, as well as their happiness, if not their very existence. There are still others who would have to compete with the rivalry of those who are thrust back, but by that undesirable process they are saved from the necessity of any rivalry at all. And this is not good for their efficiency.

When we speak of favourable conditions and oppose them to the adverse conditions which some have imagined made for progress, we do not intend it to be inferred that the life which creates the struggle should have nothing to struggle about or strive for. It will be better for having ever fresh hills to climb, but not for having its feet tied; it will be stronger for the successive breaking of records, but not for staggering under a weight it cannot carry. And the point of our contention is that the individual will take up for himself all the burdens that tend to his progress and increase of efficiency without our finding contrivances to increase them or allowing

others to do so. And it is to be hoped we have at least disposed of the doctrine of strength by starvation, progress by hindrance, happiness by restriction, efficiency by bondage, and evolution by checking the fittest to secure the survival and increase by selection of the weakest and worst. We have thus a better chance of consistency in our conclusions.

CHAPTER VI.

Towards the Highest.

An ingenious theory has been put forward to vindicate the interference with individual action and subordination of human welfare which many have regarded as essential to social well being. Summarised, the theory is something as follows :—

> " It is acknowledged that progress is only possible through the struggle for existence. This struggle, while beneficial to the race, involves the sacrifice of the individual. There is no foundation in reason why he should submit to this struggle and sacrifice. The ultimate success of the race is nothing to him here and now. His sufferings are very severe and the sacrifice great. There is no rational sanction for such progress. But religion is ultra rational and supplies a motive which reason does not supply. Christianity has been especially distinguished for the self-sacrifice of its

adherents. Western civilisation is the result of Christianity. Present and future progress depend on the altruism which sanctions and supports the sacrifice involved. This is the justification for the burden which society lays upon the individual and to which he consents, increasing the struggle and the progress."

Such is the theory by which the author of the words which were quoted as a text for our discussion has already attempted to justify his attitude of restriction. The ingenuity is exhibited in getting out of a false position. A greater ingenuity in fact though less in appearance would have been shown by not getting into that position. Like so many errors of thought producing disaster in practice it is a question of words.

The very term "struggle for existence" stands in urgent need of explanation, so as to show its bright side, which is so often overlooked, as well as the dark side on which so many dwell exclusively. The existence must afford pleasure or there would be no struggle for it. And much of the effort comprised in the struggle is

itself pleasurable. Apart from that, however, the so-called sacrifice of the individual by natural evolution suggests the question —What is the alternative open to the individual? Has he offered to him perpetual existence without struggle? By what rational method is he to escape from the struggle?

We may grant all the conditions asked for which are not absolutely inconsistent with each other. We suggest that without struggle there can be no progress. The theory says "that is nothing to us: we desire no progress, we want a good time." We retort that failing progress there must be degeneration: there can be no standing still. The theory says "it cannot be helped: we will not have this competitive struggle: it is painful." We deny that the competition is necessarily painful. On the average it is more pleasurable than painful, or it would not continue. Exceptionally adverse conditions, a few special periods of life, accident and disease, cause pain. We join in deploring failure and disaster; but we are told that these exceptional evils are a minor matter. It is the never-ceasing struggle which is

essential to progress of which complaint is made. Life and happiness is wanted without it. Then we must answer once for all: this cannot be. You cannot have a good time in the way you suggest. The conditions which result in degeneration are not pleasurable. They are painful as well as deadening.

We have seen the reason for this. The struggle comes from the life itself. To decline the struggle is to decline the life. It is the active principle of life which creates the effort, and with it the pleasure. We need not argue therefore that no one has been able to solve the problem how to avoid the struggle of which complaint is made. It is not a problem. It is a contradiction. We have only to realise the energy and activity of life itself. That is essentially the struggle. If the conditions are favourable the struggle will be pleasurable and progress will be made. If the conditions are unfavourable the struggle will be painful and degeneration will ensue. But to suggest that we can have the life without the struggle is to desire motion without moving.

That, however, is the impossible position so many are trying to establish. One has

heard of a man trying to lift himself by putting each of his feet in a bucket. It is much like trying to take one's weight off the ground by putting a mat down to stand upon. And that is the false position into which this theory leads us before the ingenuity is exercised to get us out of it. We are asked to believe that we could somehow stop the struggle—though how is not indicated. We are asked, moreover, to believe that considering only those at present in existence it would be worth while to do so in view of the pain which they have to undergo in carrying it on. And the theory does not realise that even if that were possible with the aid of a friendly comet or otherwise we should thus stop the pleasure also. That our trying to restrict the activity, energy, or struggle, is what causes the pain, and detracts from the pleasure, has not occurred to such writers as even a remote possibility.

But having been taken into this false position we are offered further inconsistency and inversion in order to get us out. Religion is described as ultra rational and specially defined to meet the view. Then, ultra rational is made to mean in effect irrational. And the struggle which

is the motive and energy of our life but which we have been told reason would make us give up (on the entirely gratuitous assumption that apart from personal and individual suicide we could give it up) we are now told religion and altruism make us continue: and thus progress. By such means we take on the burden of society or the state as an occasion for continuing the struggle. And this continuation of the struggle is intended for the good it should be noted of those individuals who suffer the pain, and, therefore, in whose interests it were desirable to stop the struggle altogether. Inconsistency can go no further.

Let us, however, without dwelling on this fatal confusion of ideas, notice what this religion and altruism really is as applied to the question before us. It has been said with considerable introspection that there are only three great motives on which for instance a story may be based—money, love, and religion. Taking each of these motives in a very wide and general sense they not inaptly sum up the whole of human life and activity, both physical and mental. We saw what is involved in the expression here termed

money when we dwelt on the individual needs of economic man, his food, clothing, and other material subsistence. We noticed his need for what money will buy, though we did not dwell on the questions of currency and exchange. We were still on the same subject when we compared him with the insects in this respect. His love is the key to the wide subject of family and reproduction we considered in the previous chapter. We have had to notice his religious motives to some extent, but must take a more general view of them, and particularly observe whether in them there is anything contrary to what we have already adduced.

What is this quality of ultra rational by which we are to suppose a revolution has been wrought counteracting the supposed rational tendency to stop competition and stop progress? If ultra merely means beyond, as one has always been given to understand, there is no revolution in this quality of religion such as we are bidden to believe of it. The phase of humanity to which we are now addressing ourselves is but an advance on the same plane. Everything is ultra rational. Life is ultra rational. The

scientist is struggling to tell us he has discovered spontaneous generation. Why, by the way, should any one be irrational or even ultra rational enough to spend wearisome days and laborious nights to find this out for us. What is the rational sanction for his struggle? Even if he has any material prize in view he must still not be able to forget that it depends entirely on his success, and that if he only desires a good time he had better take what is offered and cease his struggle. But we digress. Life, we were saying, is ultra rational. When (if ever) it has been made clear to us that life is a species of energy not differing after all very greatly from chemical action we shall have still room to marvel. Chemical action and re-action is itself ultra rational. We may know more and more only to marvel more and more.

At present the scientist has not told us very distinctly what life is, and it is on all grounds ultra rational. But if he tells us he has it all (as clearly as he has the law of gravitation) or something more simple than that, our reply will be, I can never cease to wonder at the attraction of matter for matter. The expansion of

gases, the condensation into liquid, the solidification which results from falling temperature, are all very simple. They are facts it cannot be denied. They are observable and clearly consistent with reason. But reason leaves me still wondering at them, when I try to grasp them in their entirety. And the marvels with which the teeming universe is filled do not leave us less full of awe, if we have any sense of the sublime, because we get to understand them somewhat. Thunder may be no longer the voice of angry spirits, but it is none the less sublime. It is beyond our rational comprehension because reason is not set to comprehend —only if possible to understand.

When, however, we come to life and thought, the scientist may tell me that thought is a function of the brain, and the grey matter secretes it, or that it is mechanism; another mode of motion. I am still full of a wonder I have tried a hundred times in vain to express at the capacity to think. Whether he is right or wrong in his deduction makes no difference to the marvellousness of it all. If religion is ultra rational in that sense all is well, but if in any other we are faced with a

serious not to say deplorable position.

It can offer nothing of comfort to the religious mind to be told that religion is not merely ultra rational but contra-rational or irrational. If that is the case religion must regard itself as having notice to quit. It must cease to have a part in the mind and motives of mankind if it can be proved contrary to reason. We do not so read the signs of the times or the page of history. Religion has often had to give up its creeds. But it has always shown clearly that it did not depend on creeds. In a word, it is a life. And what, in principle, belongs to life as a force, belongs to religion.

So that we are in a sense back at our starting point, or rather we find ourselves at the top of a pyramid looking in every direction down an inclined plane. We began with humanity at its base. And that, after all, is our concern throughout: for on the level at which we began we propose to end. The principle with which we commenced was an economic motive in mankind to seek the supply of certain material needs varying in kind and degree, but not to be dispensed with in human life. We found as the result of these

imperious demands a tendency in each individual to strive after his personal interests in the sphere in which he moved, because only thus could he hope to produce or obtain the minimum supply so essential to him or the larger control which his ambitions indicated. And we had to notice at once the disadvantage to all of hindering the unit, the one, from producing in accordance with his motives to effort, or of taking from him the result of producing.

At once, however, we were met with the suggestion, all too common in our day, that the individual should be subordinated to society. But while the error was expressed in a condensed form convenient to be analysed the doctrine was set forth by reference to inferior forms of life. And we had to dig down below the base of humanity and observe the foundations of our pyramid at a lower level in the motives influencing social and other insects. Whether or not the subordination of the individual to the society of which it formed a unit in the insect world was in the due progress of the species—a step in its evolution to something higher—we had nothing before us to enable us

to determine. But clearly no such tendency existed in the case of human nature as was proved by the fall and decay of those national, military, or political organisations in which the principle had been seen most clearly at work.

Nor was there anything in the voluntary endurance, by the individual, of pain and torture in upholding the doctrine and practice of his religion. It was a personal motive which moved him to that as against the will and decree of the society to which he was subject. Even when the society (using the word in the sense of any controlling authority) was very willing to make easy for the individual the subordination it desired, the individual frequently refused to conform even for conformity's sake. The Church itself as representing the very religion which had once urged to this refusal then asked for itself this subordination of the individual and his reason. For long in face of alternate acquiesence and contumacy it demanded the sacrifice of individual choice and freedom of judgment. At times it has been most active in the extermination of heresy in the name of the Christian religion. The individual was none the less

defiant of its earthly power and appealed to a Higher—the individual against the community—for his liberty and reason. Progress has always been in that direction. The historic trend which many have found recently in a contrary direction will soon be seen to have been retrogression, whether in religion or in economics; though there are none at present to uphold the doctrine consistently.

But why is all this? We have already seen the reason. We cannot attain progress by limiting and burdening the individual, because that is to expect movement in a direction contrary to the motive power. We may get progress in spite of these restrictions. The progress may be even more apparent when it is in direct antagonism to the restrictions. The clash of conflict brings it to our notice. But it is not the hindrance we are overcoming which effects the progress. That only gives us the consciousness of it. A small disturbance in our atmosphere is more noticeable by us than the terrific flight through space by which we take our annual journey round the sun. The meteor's flash is the result of the opposition it meets, but it moves none the quicker for that.

Suppose, however, we have no desire to progress at all, may we not avoid the conflict by which we do progress? The answer we have seen to be a direct negative. No one suggests such a possibility with regard to the lower forms of life. We start at the lowest forms of which we have any knowledge and we see that here is activity—an activity it may be we do not properly know or understand, but activity, energy, struggle. This is life. It goes on through long ages. The individuals die when they have lived their life. The fact of their dying only when their life has been lived seems usually to be forgotten by those who centre their thoughts on the evolution, who think only of the decay of this or that obsolete form. They dwell on the sacrifice of the individual to the type. But the individual is, except in the case of rare holocausts, only sacrificed when he has finished his day. There is nothing here of the increasing burden of society on the individual.

But in the long ages there is progress to higher sorts of life. We go down to the lowest base, the very foundation of life, and we find this tendency of life to increase to the margin of its possible

subsistence. But evolutionists have left a wrong impression with most of us. They have talked of the conflict, the struggle for existence, and have dwelt on the adverse conditions overcome by means of it, of the surmounting of this difficulty and the avoidance of that danger, until many of us have got it into our minds that the adverse conditions make the progress. But the brake van does not push the train from the rear. It is some energy in the form of steam that we have got into an engine at the front which pulls it. What is the energy of life does not concern us. But it is there down at the lowest foundation of our pyramid and it is still there at the highest point to which the highest creature that has life has yet aspired.

We are told that though the lower forms must submit to the conditions of their struggle, man having reason might stop the conflict. He would stop his competition, limit it within and without, and restrict the population to the means of subsistence. As we have seen, that means stopping his life. We pass by the fact that most of those who would stop competition only propose to stop the

competition which produces subsistence, while the increase of population is to go unchecked. We say nothing of the tendency of their methods to encourage the increase of population of the worst sort and discourage that of the better. We take the broader and more simple view—that to stop competition in any form, to hinder it in any way, even if possible, is to hinder life. And this extends to the highest forms of life. In this way we should thwart and reduce the highest conflicts—the spiritual struggles upward. We will dwell on that presently.

We see now, however, what amount of meaning and truth there is in the oft quoted words of John Ruskin: "Co-operation is the law of life; competition is the law of death." On the exact contrary the law of life is competition. Co-operation is only an incident of competition as we might show in detail, save that it would be a digression from the path we are anxious to pursue.* And when we say

*The subject is treated in "Economics and Socialism," Chapter XIV. Mr. Ruskin's actual words are: "My principles of Political Economy ..... were all summed up in a single sentence in the last volume of 'Modern Painters'—'Government and Co-operation are in all things the Laws of Life; Anarchy and competition the Laws of Death.'" It is difficult to imagine what reasonable construction could be put on these words in order to make the doctrine true. Government is a matter of rule and precedent, of extraneous authority and more or less strict limitation. Life is the opposite of all these. Even government itself must modify its rules and adopt new precedents as life goes

competition is the law of life we do not mean or think that it is conditioned by a state of semi-starvation or unfavourable conditions of life. These are hindrances to be overcome if they exist at all. Progress depends on their being (whether with much effort or little) successfully overcome. In nature the type is gradually, very gradually, modified to meet the circumstances. But in Nature the environment changes with a slowness equal to that of the change of type. It is only

beyond previously existing bounds. Life does not regard the rules and precedents as such. Its only rule is its own force as opposed to extraneous authority. The co-operation it sanctions is just that which aids and embodies competition. The competition or striving may be anarchy—no-government by extraneous authority—but it is that which increases life and to the limits of life's power avoids death. To do this it goes beyond restrictive rules to meet circumstances to the extent of its own force. But Mr. Ruskin's ideas of social relationship should not be taken too seriously. He could not in the least see why prices and wages should be fixed by demand. Bishops, soldiers, doctors and lawyers he thought did not depend on demand for their wages. In which he was wrong. But if he had been right so far he had chosen just the classes of men who do not directly produce at all. What could be the use of such an analogy? "The natural and right system respecting all labour is that it should be paid at a fixed rate, but the good workman employed and the bad workman unemployed." And thus we have the problem of the unemployed according to Ruskin's own desire and request. For he has had great influence in this direction. The only difference is that workmen are not as he thinks good and bad, but let us say good, moderate, and inferior. There is no sharp cut line. Oh, why did Mr. Ruskin not stick to his art? Why did he try to meddle with questions of trade? It is a serious responsibility to be a great man or possess style. Mr. Ruskin's doctrines could never have done the mischief they have but for his commanding personality and fascinating style. For their own sake there was nothing worthy of the vogue they have had. What would become of the people if all commodities were fixed in price—sale or no sale—to be wasted altogether if too dear for the means of purchasers, to be taken and wasted by the first comers to the starvation of later arrivals if so low priced as to involve inadequate sacrifice? And how could wages be fixed without fixing prices of commodities, together with previously ordered and exact supplies of sunshine, rain and the like?

where man tries his prentice hand that the relation of conditions and adaptation to them is so much disregarded.

The assumption which is so coolly made that mankind in society could stop the conflict and struggle of individual existence is entirely gratuitous. No one has ever suggested any reliable method of enforcing any scheme for limiting population. It is difficult enough to restrict illegitimate births even now. What it would be under artificial contrivances for forcibly limiting population to the means of subsistence it is impossible to conceive.

Moreover, even if for argument's sake we admit what in fact we do not admit what is the purpose to be attained ? It is suggested that we are thus to stop the pain of the conflict. But if we could allow the possibility of satisfactorily limiting the growth of population, it only follows that we succeed in restricting life. Is it probable that such restriction would tend to increase happiness or reduce pain ? We should have to assume for that purpose that life is all pain, or more pain than pleasure: that in conferring life and energy on us, the power to move, and feel, think, and know, a great wrong has been

done to us. This does not mean that we suffer great wrong by reason of our conditions, but that a great wrong has been done to us in giving us life. It is a morbid, dismal doctrine, to which only the mentally diseased could subscribe.

If, on the other hand, life is to be a source of happiness and joy, surely it must be by our being allowed to live our lives. It seems a monstrous doctrine that every lower creature is to be free to live its own life: to find joy in its existence, to fulfil the law of its being and pass on its race in a condition slightly if ever so slightly more fitted for the conditions of its future, whilst man alone must bemoan the fact that he lives and must reduce if he can to a minimum the energy of his upward struggle. What means all this struggle for existence but the simple law of self-preservation for love of life? Why does the instinct of self-preservation possess every beast if it be not that it prefers life rather than death? Man alone seems to be a suicide, either individually or racially. And after due reflection on all the facts within the author's knowledge bearing on the point the suggestion is here deliberately made that that state of

affairs is entirely the result of the conditions of society which it is the purpose of this book to denounce.

It is easy to retort that suicide betokens mental disease. But it is a disease only to be found in those conditions in which society has become a burden on the individual. It is in the state of highest civilisation when the community or the ruler has become oppressive that suicide is prevalent. It is not natural. It is not in the best civilisation though we have called it the highest as involving greatest subordination of the individual. At times, in human history the ruler could command a subject to commit suicide and be obeyed. But in ordinary suicide from mental disease the smallest analysis of motives indicates that to the mind of the suicide life offers more of pain than is to be feared from death.

It is not by adding any weight to our existence that it can be made more joyful. That can only be done by adding energy and motive: and surely no one after adequate consideration can seriously believe that the increasing burden of society on the individual with all the increased efficiency which (erroneously)

they imagine is likely to result is ever going to add energy and motive to the life of the individual. We do not desire and shall not be better for the efficiency which robs us of joy in life. That is certainly sacrificing the individual to society (or to something), but to the extent to which it is operative it is utterly destructive of the race with all its efficiency.

That human life healthily and freely lived is pleasurable, surely will not be denied. Yet we are met on every side with proposals for restricting it in every way. To these proposals we might listen with a pitying smile, but, unfortunately, we have to pity ourselves because the proposals have obtained favour with those who directly or indirectly rule. We can scarcely blame them. The mischief arises from the bad teaching they have had to undergo at the hands of philosophers for whom there is only the excuse that much learning has overcome their reason.

We are told that the lower creatures have submitted to the struggle because they had not the reason to enable them to understand the painful conditions in which their lives were lived. Happy

beasts that, not having learnt the language of philosophy, are still in ignorance of the hideous nature of the struggle through which they are passing. How much more pleasurable would be the lives of thousands of human beings if they could live in similar indifference to the language of those who, with brilliant rhetoric, abuse this struggle as a curse. By the much speaking, however, they are induced to endure any sacrifice of themselves and their families rather than submit to the tyranny and oppression of the conditions through which alone their subsistence can be obtained. Instead of the natural conflict which at the bidding of this rhetoric they desire to avoid, they take on themselves a much more painful and less successful conflict made so by the tying of their own hands.

But when we are told that all this conflict goes on in Nature for want of or in opposition to reason we cannot refrain from asking "Whose reason?" It is impossible to suggest that reason carries on the conflict. Reason is not a motive force: it is only a guiding power. It is the rudder of the vessel, not the wind or the steam. Sometimes the ship fails to

answer the rudder. Not infrequently the wind drives a frail barque upon the rocks. But life does not go on from age to age against reason. When it seems to do so it is only because our knowledge is so limited that we do not see the deeper reason underlying the action which appears contrary to our notions of wisdom.

Guided by the wisdom of some of us the mouse would never leave its hole for food lest the cat should catch it; the deer would avoid the stream and die of thirst lest the lion should be at the watering place. Still more certainly the mother would be at none of the labour in which she delights to bring food to her young, and would leave her offspring to be captured or slain rather than herself incur any danger for them. The bull would never fight and risk his life for the lordship of the herd. The leader of men would sit at home crouching in terror of the conflict. Blood would not be spilt, for our timid lives would be lifeless and bloodless altogether. But Nature thinks otherwise, and she is justified of her children.

All this, however, is done by the choice of the individual himself. In him is the motive power, and if he were bidden by

the state or society to do what he cheerfully and zealously does of his own accord he would in some cases point blank refuse at any price; and in the remainder do it only for a substantial reward taken from the labours of the rest of the nation.

The reason for this proceeding contrary (by the theory we have noticed) to reason is that he finds pleasure in it. We cannot say that life is irrational or unreasonable, though we may well admit and feel that it is ultra rational if not supernatural. But life impels us to the doing of very many things which we could not postulate or even conceive from a knowledge of physics. Nor is it a mere fancy that natural law is applicable to the spiritual world. It is not only by analogy that all the features of life in its lowliest form can be traced in this its highest development. For it is life still.

There is no need for us to trace these features of spiritual life and the argument does not depend in the least on their correct delineation in detail. We may regard religion and spiritual life as such conception of the unseen as makes for righteousness, or we may conceive of it as merely the faculty of awe and wonder.

We may, indeed, take into our conception any serious attempt to define religion as it is, but not those definitions which are framed to suit a particular theory. These latter we must exclude altogether since they are probably confusing as definitions, and still more certainly likely to confuse the issue before us. But we must beware of making our definition too narrow. For if we are to cover all the ground beyond self-preservation and the love of family, there is much in our pyramid of life before we reach the actual apex.

That altruism is not confined to the highest or any religion ought scarcely to need argument. It may be a question at what point the quality of altruism should be considered to begin. The barest justice is near akin to altruism, for absolute selfishness may be relied upon to do less than justice if its subject has no fear of discovery or its consequences. So that even before we reach the idea of family or friends we get need for altruism. That honesty is the best policy for all is perhaps a truism and even for the individual has become a proverb. It has been suggested that the truth of such a proverb depends on the efficiency of the police. But when

the question of trading is considered the altruism which sees and considers the other party's side of the bargain is not unknown. It may be enlightened selfishness which results in this attitude. But if that is to be called wise selfishness it is far better for the race than much foolish altruism which could be named. Let it not be imagined that the claim of religion to support and enforce justice is ignored. On the other hand, when we admit religion as a motive to altruism it must be understood that it is regarded as no less important and beneficial to mankind in so far as it secures justice.

By this is not meant the justice of Austin's jurisprudence, depending on the wisdom and highest equity of the laws which happen to be enacted by the supreme authority in the particular state in question. We must be understood to mean by justice in this contention that natural justice which is in the present-day philosophy not so much ignored as denied to exist: the enforcement of those rights which the individual must be conceived as claiming even against the community though for the time being in which we live it is denied that the individual has

any natural rights, if indeed any rights at all.

It is true that outside the empirical definition of justice, which comprises only such justice as the laws will enforce, the community can have no interest in refusing even-handed justice as between individuals. And since the community is understood theoretically to mean the whole of the individuals it can have no rights as against them. But justice in practice depends on the wisdom and reasoning power necessary to make sound laws and administer them impartially. And when the community begins to practise its altruism at other people's expense it is in great need to support its proceedings of the theory that the individual has no rights against the community. It would be surprising if there were none to contend for the theory that the individual has no rights against society under those circumstances. And if the contention be admitted there is nothing to be said beyond the protest that such so-called justice is not beneficial to the whole or in the long run to any. We may, however, say that the justice we meant to ask for was justice with a keener view and

longer sight, not justice which was blind to the consequences of its conduct, or regardless of all considerations save those which imperfect legislation had taken into account.

The reader whose eye for sophistry is at all colour blind is in danger of finding himself in a maze as the result of our giving two meanings to the term altruism in the preceding paragraphs. Let us, therefore, point out that what the individual does of his own free will beyond justice for the benefit of others is properly called altruism. What is done by the government under cover of the community for the benefit of some at the expense of others is not altruism at all, although it has got itself extolled by that name: it is simply injustice and wrong. This does not at all favour the view that government should not have regard for the welfare of the people. That is what it exists for. Nor does it preclude the possibility of using public funds for the poor without return from those benefited. That, as we shall see, can be accomplished without injustice at all. And if it could not it is conceivable that all necessary altruism might be secured without

injury to those gently compelled to a reluctant altruism. That, however, is a purely imaginary question. For as we shall see, all that is beneficial can be secured with absolute justice. And if society or the community will stop its own flaming injustices there will be little left to complain about.

The point from which we made this digression was that even the individual's own welfare demanded of him in his own dealings a feeling bordering close on altruism. The line between justice and altruism is indistinguishable. And enlightened self-interest demands the practice of justice if the business relations are desired to be of long continuance. When, however, we pass to family relationships of wife or husband and children, we plunge at once into a mass of altruistic motives which are not religion at all. They are merely natural affection. That Greeks and Romans of old had lower family ideals than we have proves nothing to the contrary. Nor is anything to be proved from the low ideals of half civilised and savage races. Indeed, in this Christian England instances of low brutality are plentiful enough though our general

standard is higher than in the cases mentioned. The altruism of private friendships is no new thing, and history records instances enough which we should hardly surpass to-day; though from the nature of the case the highest sacrifices made for friendship's sake are never known to the world, if indeed they are known to their recipients.

A much more distinct motive of an altruistic character is that which leads its possessor to sacrifice himself for his country or nation. But here we come very clearly on a qualification we shall have to make. We are discussing motives. We have said that reason is not a motive. Not in the least can that statement be retracted. But contrary to the theory summarised at the beginning of this chapter, progress depends on the application of reason to the motives involved. It is so in the matter of patriotism and, as we shall see, of religion.

It is a mistake to imagine that patriotism consists only of shouting for war against the foreigner, and singing "God save the King." Patriotism sometimes means cutting off the head of the king. That depends on the fitness or otherwise

of the king. It is an extreme course to have to adopt, though even in modern times Napoleon proved to the world that mere imprisonment must occasionally be somewhat close if an aggressive monarch is to be restrained from destroying the liberties of the people.

Patriotism sometimes means flinging denunciations at an angry mob of one's own countrymen for their cruelty, injustice or folly. But all that concerns us at present is that patriotism is a force operating through altruistic motives; though we make the observation and must hereafter repeat it, that it will not conduce to progress unless it is guided by reason.

Now the reasons why altruism in its ordinary sense is applied more particularly to the motives of pity and benevolence are not far to seek. One is doubtless a question of chronology. For patriotism has had a longer career than the higher altruism. Beyond that, both patriotism and the natural affections so-called have a more defined sphere of operation. Still further, the altruism which goes beyond the barrier of the nation or race is indeed more unselfish in respect of its object

than the love of country or kin. Whether it is more powerful is a question of fact to be determined in each case. But it may safely be said that no higher quality resulting freely from life and growth will on the average diminish an inferior quality below what is beneficial. In other words, charity begins at home. A healthy altruism will have to regard family and kin first if they are in need of its aid. After that it will extend to its own country and will flow beyond that only when its growth is vigorous. But it is only when it becomes sufficiently ample and vigorous thus to overflow and forget relationship and nationality that it is worthy to be called altruism.

Most of all, however, altruism is held up as admirable on account of the qualification of its object. No fact can be more important to be remembered in economics or sociology than that it is not every one who can arouse in us altruistic feelings. A well paid official, free from risk of personal loss by his business, does not inspire the taxpayer, who carries constant care and risk, with any feelings of altruism. For such a man there is no motive to sacrifice one's own

goods or pleasure. And the essence of altruism of the higher sort transcending bare justice is that it extends itself not to all, wealthy and poor alike, but to those who are in poverty or distress, to those in fact who need help. It is a wild notion, therefore, that altruism can be a motive of development by the process of subordinating the individual to the whole society—laying an increasing burden on the individual. Its very essence is to differentiate : to choose : to individualise, because the sorrow and need involve pain to the unit who feels. Religion emphasises the need in giving a freer, wider, and deeper conception of life's yearning and the feelings of body and mind.

It is a great mistake of modern times to regard altruism as the essence of religion. We have had so much talk of the social problem that some have imagined the highest and only religion to be the care of other people. "By the government" ought almost to be added. For those who have talked most in this strain have shown a marked disposition not to make any particular sacrifice themselves, but to secure their laudable objects by expenditure from the purse of the public or of

the individuals more wealthy than themselves.

This, however, is not the essence of religion. Altruism is not by any means the only form of religious motive. Indeed, that is not the true idea of religion, but rather an exhibition of the power of religion under the circumstances calling for such a motive. It is quite impossible to have an enlightened view of Christianity without some glimpse of the infinite majesty of love, self-sacrifice, charity, kindness, pity and benevolence which its teaching enjoins. Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you, has not been surpassed and cannot be surpassed. It contains and goes beyond the altruism which strives to lift up the fallen and save the helpless. But it is equally impossible to have any clear sight of Christianity without comprehending that it is the religion of freedom, liberty, personal choice, individualism; unfettered life, spiritual direct worship, answer to one's own conscience; exercise of reason, almost disregard of authority. When a man comes to tell me that I am to submit to the burden of society on

the individual in the name of altruism by the direction of Christianity; that I am to show mercy and loving-kindness by the payment of the taxes which hinder my business and prevent my relieving the necessities I see under my own eyes: that I am to starve myself and family because my society has bidden me not to work under certain conditions or at certain prices which it (society, not I, the individual) may deem improper: that the government is to decide for me the number of hours I may work; an official is to be paid to acquire some land from which to cut me a sufficiently small piece for my maintenance; that an army of fighting men is to be maintained to glorify the nation; an army of policemen and officers to superintend every detail of my life; that I am to be educated, whatever my capacities, in a sort of cast iron mould, religious creed included: that the government is to take for schemes of its own all the tools and sustenance I can produce and bid me work for it, or not work at all, laying burden after burden upon me calling it altruism!!—calling it Christianity!!!

All this may be humanism for anything

I know to the contrary. I do not happen to know what is meant by humanism. If it means the worship of man and the subordination of the race to human authority it would well answer to the description just given. The word then indicates an antithesis to the worship of God and humanism is put in contra-distinction to any form of Deism including Christianity. Such a view accords with Comtes' socialism. Humanity turned into an object of worship with priests not less authoritative than those of the most oppressive Church well justifies Huxley's expression, "Catholicism minus Christianity." It is true that worshippers whether of gods or devils, have usually given human forms to the objects of their worship. But only occasionally, as in the deification of Roman emperors, have they frankly worshipped man. It has never been edifying. One is reminded of Robespierre's "Etre Supreme." "Mumbo Jumbo of the Woods seems to me venerable beside this new deity of Robespierre: for this is a *conscious* Mumbo Jumbo, and *knows* that he is machinery."

That a power outside and above human beings should choose from amongst them

certain persons and ordain them to a priesthood is not quite obviously irrational. Such a doctrine may have some force though it is not the highest. But to say "There is no God but man, and I am the priest of humanity, with the authority of a priest," is to invite irreverence and scorn. To say, "There is no gospel but humanism; appoint officials enough; give them control enough over individuals; with power to tax and spend regardless of the cost or source; thus will all wrong, poverty, and injustice be destroyed," is to invite contempt.

But Christianity is not the only religion of which history has heard. And this talk of altruism, even dismissing altruism-by-Act-of-Parliament from our minds, shows a lack of perception of what the essence of religion is. We have spoken of it as a conception of the unseen. That the conception should make for righteousness depends upon our enlightenment with regard to righteousness. Such a question introduces reason as a guide. The motive power is the conception of the unseen. The feeling of wonder, the realisation of the sublime, is closely connected with this idea, and is comprised in a full delimita-

tion of religion. But so far it depends little on the particular creed. Many a man engages in worship and listens to a sermon from which he gets help and spiritual strength, though he knows that the preacher is far from being up to date in his science, and the sermon itself contains doubtful doctrine. Many a preacher in the pulpit is well aware that he could not conscientiously give the answers as to his own beliefs that he gave when he entered that ministry in the comparative childhood of his own life. He has grown since then as the race has grown since its childhood. And he has grown in mind faster than the Church has grown. But he is content to let the Church to which he belongs learn slowly as she must and allow the old men to die in the faith they love, and the young men to learn as they will continue to learn even after his day. But the power and motive of religion is none the less real, and allowing for varying degrees of intensity, none the less continuous. We have indicated why and we will remark it again presently.

If we would understand this power of religion we must see examples of other

forms. It was reported when the Russo-Japanese war was drawing to its close that one of the Japanese Generals, then become famous over the world for his ability and valour, read an invocation before his assembled army to the spirits of the soldiers who had been slain in the war. "Very unreasonable," says one of another creed. "Quite ultra-rational," says another, meaning the same thing. But is it at all unreasonable or contra-rational? There is the force of religion. And the world knows by this time that it is a force to be reckoned with—a conception of the unseen.

Such a conception is not without its counterpart in the Christian religion, "seeing that we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses," says the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews, referring to the great and just departed. "Let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race which is set before us." It need not be forgotten that the race of the Christian writer is of a higher character than the other. But we are discussing motive power.

Altruism, when properly understood, stands high as a motive and as an object. But not every man's notion of what he would compel me to do is to be regarded by me as altruism. That is no motive for me. The question is, What appeals to me and my own conscience? And that must be in accordance with reason as far as I know reason, though reason itself would never move me to effort concerning it. To know is one thing, to feel is another. And without feeling there will be no effort to do. Every successful religious leader has made it clear to his followers that knowledge alone would not save them. On the other hand the altruism which is to advance mankind must be according to knowledge. It may otherwise be injurious to its objects whatever may be the effect on its subject.

Religion itself is however a spiritual life: a life above that of mere animal wants and the gratification of material desires. Yet even here is danger. For did not the intense spiritual life of Christianity lead to a period of asceticism followed by a period of monasticism in which the spirit was lost in the form. No building

can stand long except on a firm foundation. And no hope can be entertained of its sustaining the shocks and storms of time unless it is kept true by the line and plummet of reason.

The highest as well as the lowest motives will fail to carry us forward if we disregard the right path and turn our helm in a direction contrary to progress. Religion has nothing to say to us in favour of reversing our helm. It is itself a life. Life feels, rejoices, presses on and mounts up. What is offered in the name of religion is frequently not religion at all. It is no conception of the unseen; no worship in spirit and utmost truth. There is merely a demand for submission to authority. To call that religion is merely a lie. But reason does not oppose religion, though it claims to guide the thought and effort of the person moved by religion.

All that reason has to say to us with regard to religion itself is that if we force it it is gone. As well hope to create a living snail by fashioning a shell as try to compel either spiritual life or altruism. Whether or not spontaneous generation accounts for life, and life itself is but a new form of energy, it is perfectly certain

that we cannot create it. This applies equally to the mental and spiritual life. We can only seek the conditions favourable to it. They are not restriction of the individual in his production of subsistence. That we have seen in the lower levels. It is so in the higher. Laying burdens on the individual is to discourage the fit and encourage the unfit to perpetuate the race we have also seen. And the highest life we know depends on the same freedom for its development. Nor should I believe without very overwhelming evidence that such highest life had ever been developed in abundance in a period when individual, material, and family life was degenerating.

CHAPTER VII.

The Strength of Freedom.

If unification is a proper object of scientific research we are making rapid advance in the right direction. It is unnecessary to recapitulate again the points we have touched. But this is clear throughout the whole course of our inquiry that pleasure, painlessness (so far as it is attainable), prosperity, progress, and all that is best and highest, is to be attained only by allowing each creature to live his own life. That is rational. That alone is consistent with reason even when we are introduced to the supernatural. And it is only another expression for liberty or freedom.

There seemed for the fraction of an instant the danger of our taking the turn which would lead us into a quagmire of inconsistency. When we had reached the cross roads of the conditions making for progress we had to glance in the direction

of increasing and intensifying the struggle as an aid to evolution towards higher forms and accomplishments. But that was not our path. It is no business of ours to travel in that direction. We have nothing to do with intensifying the struggle. That is Nature's business and direction, not ours. And even our glance was in deference to the view of so many exponents of evolution and none of our own inclination. For this view is the notion of making life more difficult, which requires no aid from us. And from the beginning we had held that life should be as free and easy as was possible for us to secure. The conditions should be as favourable as Nature would allow.

It was no competence in the matter of biology which helped us in a right decision. And authority there has left us largely without guidance on the point. For it has concerned itself with the changes in form and their cause, observing clearly enough the incessant struggle for existence and ever changing adaptation to conditions; but not telling us, as in truth it had nothing particularly to prove, that it was the favourable conditions which produced improvements. Indeed, it has

dwelt on the difficulties as if the difficulties gave the strength, which is not quite the truth.

What saved us from error was some competence in the matter of economics. Which leads us to what might be regarded as a mere illustration of our point save for its intrinsic importance to the human beings who throng our daily path. The commonest error in political economy has been and still is that there is need to safeguard prices. This is the foundation principle of Protection in all its forms.

The fear is that without adequate provision to the contrary there will be such a surplus of material subsistence produced or imported that the prices will be reduced to a quite disastrously low level. It is an altogether baseless fear.* That prices

*Mark Twain in his "Life on the Mississipi," records an incident which is more illustrative of this point than I can hope to make clear. It is in Chapter XIII., "A Pilot's Needs." Among these needs is courage, and "cubs" are trained "by various strategic tricks to look danger in the face a little more calmly." The humorist tells of a "friendly swindle" played on him in his pilot apprentice days. Mr. Bixby (his chief and very much his hero) left him to pilot a crossing—"about the plainest and simplest crossing in the whole river. One couldn't come to any harm whether he ran it right or wrong, and as for depth there never had been any bottom there." However, Mr. Bixby managed beforehand to ask a question or two calculated to put the young pilot into the conditon of nervousness which characterises the present day philanthropist. "I suppose you know the next crossing?" "I can run it with my eyes shut." "How much water is there in it?" "I couldn't get bottom there with a church steeple." "You think so, do you?" Then he left, to hide behind a smoke stack, having by the very tone of his last question shaken his pupil's confidence. The remainder should be read in the original but, briefly, arrangements had been made to gather an audience on

should be low is not to be specially desired. And the advocates of free trade who advocate only cheapness have only half learnt their subject. But that prices should be high is not at all to be desired. And the advocates of contrivances to raise or maintain high prices have not learnt their subject at all.

There is only one general statement

deck and to let the leadsmen announce fictitious figures as the depth. The captain aided the swindle by asking in apparent uneasiness as the boat started across, "Where is Mr. Bixby?" That and some imagination destroyed the remains of the pupil's courage. Eventually, says he, "My hands were in a nervous flutter. I could not ring a bell intelligibly with them. I flew to the speaking tube and shouted to the engineer: 'Oh, Ben, if you love me, back her. Quick, Ben! Oh back the immortal *soul* out of her.' I heard the door closing gently. I looked around, and there stood Mr. Bixby, smiling a bland, sweet smile. Then the audience on the hurricane deck sent up a thundergust of humiliating laughter. I saw it all, now, and I felt meaner than the meanest man in human history. I laid in the lead, set the boat in her marks, came ahead on the engines, and said: 'It was a fine trick to play on an orphan, wasn't it? I suppose I'll never hear the last of how I was ass enough to heave the lead at the head of sixty-six.' 'Well, no, you won't, may be. In fact, I hope you won't; for I want you to learn something by that experience. Didn't you *know* there was no bottom in that crossing?' 'Yes, sir, I did.' 'Very well, then. You shouldn't have allowed me or anybody else to shake your confidence in that knowledge. Try to remember that. And another thing: when you get into a dangerous place don't turn coward. That isn't going to help matters any.' It was a good enough lesson but pretty hardly learned. Yet about the hardest part of it was that for months I so often had to hear a phrase which I had conceived a particular distaste for. It was, 'Oh, Ben, if you love me, back her!'" How one would like to ask the sentimental social reformers who are so plentiful in these days, "Don't you *know* that there is no limit to what the nation will be prepared to buy if they have the means? Don't you *know* that it is impossible to have too much and that the only danger is of having too little? Don't you *know* that when the people have enough to consume it will be impossible to induce them to work for lower wages? Don't you *know* that they only work for something to consume? Don't you *know* that having that they will want leisure and something more to consume—always forward if they are free?" But these people do not know, and they are crying out in a very Babel of voices: "Oh, Ben, if you love me, *back* her. Quick, Ben! Oh, back the immortal *soul* out of her." And that is what is being done to a considerable extent.

which can truthfully be made concerning commodities: that subsistence should be abundant. Only one rule can be applied with safety in any question of prices: that they should not be interfered with. In dealing with questions of the land from which subsistence must be drawn the one condition is that the monopolisation or ownership of it should be subject to taxation based on the value of the land exclusive of improvements. One condition only is applicable to labour consistently with public welfare and the advantage of the labourer and his family: that it should be free from either force or restriction.

Now the error that it is necessary to keep up the prices of every object within the survey of political economy is not analogous to the error we have had to guard against with respect to the conditions favourable to the evolution and advancement of living creatures. It is the same error. It ignores life; the subject of chief concern, the force which carries on the whole process. Just as Adam Smith assumed the demand which constitutes the reason for all supply, so Darwin and his followers assumed the life which

required and secured the appropriate forms for the environment to be inhabited. It is seldom that our words impress others with full realisation of what we assume although to us the fact assumed is too patent to be even mentioned. Hence in the one of these cases this failure to explain, if even to understand, the influence of demand on prices: and in the other case the impression given that the adverse conditions are themselves the cause of advancement. In both cases the force at the back of the phenomena they had to consider was life. The two masters are remarkably alike in their overwhelming supply of facts bearing on their subject. Darwin simply teems with examples from every corner of the earth, and Smith has never been surpassed in his own subject for wealth of illustration. But in both cases their modes of expressing themselves have left room for an impression which it is not conceivable they could have approved.*

*The long neck of the giraffe enables him to reach a source of subsistence which, without that equipment, would be impossible to him. But it is obvious that the long neck could never have been developed if his progenitors had died of starvation before they acquired it, or even because they suffered from dearth for want of that new source. Their suffering want would not give them the required equipment. They could not use the neck before they had it. Nor even when they had it could it render serv ce unless the provision existed. On both sides evolution and development must come from a surplus.

Whether our desire is for advancement of the race and progressive evolution, or for adequate prices, the effective method for us to adopt is that of securing the utmost possible liberty and the most favourable conditions for individual development: the free exercise and satisfaction of the individual wishes. What causes the struggle for existence is the overflow of life, howsoever we may define or understand life. A lack of subsistence may increase the struggle, but it will not aid the evolution. That depends on the life finding its appropriate subsistence. It may be well, though it ought not to be necessary, to say that favourable conditions do not involve luxury or idleness. These in truth are not favourable conditions. The hard life which some live helps their development. Does not the luxurious town-dweller or fashionable person seek health by living as nearly as possible to the rugged life of the countryman, though there are still higher

With the smallest improvement in natural faculty for which there is a corresponding scope and reward, a better chance of reproduction is given. But the improvement is futile, and so far wasted, if there is nothing for it to reach out towards; and on the other hand it cannot be made merely by making the provision for it: still less can it be expected from the fact that without the means of reaching out the creature must remain unsupplied. On all sides it is the *extra*, not the deficiency, which little by little aids evolution.

possibilities to those who desire greater strife ?

But the appropriate subsistence must be had for development. The fare may be coarse but must be wholesome and plentiful. The life of the slums cannot but result in degeneration. Lack of air ; lack of food ; unwholesome drinking and feeding : when these begin to produce in great abundance the fine physique and healthy mind which often emanate from the hillside cottage, then we may begin to believe that adverse conditions causing a more difficult struggle for existence do indeed help evolution. Until then we can have no doubt that it is the overflow of life in favourable circumstances to which we are indebted for progress.

Not otherwise can we regard the question of prices. The struggle for existence which life supports is the cause of the demand. The increasing demand is what raises prices. The overflow of life, therefore, is the best antidote to falling prices. Indeed, it is the only antidote. To raise or maintain prices by stopping supply or reducing production, below what would have taken place in absolutely unrestricted freedom and competition is to diminish

the possible overflow of life. Its total force must be reduced. Life will continue and subsistence must therefore continue to be had, but it will be on a lower standard. Life may be relied on if left in its full vigour to extend to the margin of its comfortable subsistence. Our business is not to stint that subsistence on the foolish pretext of keeping up prices, but to secure the abundant overflow of the subsistence and trust life to take it up. There need be no wish to stint population if we set free the production. Thus only may we hope to keep prices up to a level which is profitable to the man whose business is to apply labour to its purposes, and at the same time the highest that are possible to the man whose wages are agreed upon before he begins his work.

In this way, moreover, is the variety which tends to happiness most adequately secured. We had to omit from the previous chapter all reference to increase of life, and consequent increase of the joy of life which freedom permits. We have to dismiss from our reckoning the termination of the individual life on any conceivable theory of evolution. If we are to assume that life is robbed of all its

joy by the fact that it must end, then it were well that the planet should have remained uninhabited. But we seem somehow to pity the moon its want of conscious life. And it is an unnatural life that lives always in full gaze on its last hour. The rabbit must not be assumed to live a joyless life because his end may be to provide a meal for a snake, and the lowliest as well as the highest organism must be considered glad (as they are) of such life as they can get. If that view be taken, and it is the only one on which we can be thankful for life at all, we shall avoid distracting considerations which could lead us to no conclusion whatever.

We are thus free to admire the teeming excess of life in its variety of forms wherever the conditions are favourable. The tropical forest becomes to us as full of joy as it is of life—crowded with happiness as it is resplendent with colour—bright as its forms are various; and all this is possible because on the same place there can be favourable conditions of life for another type after the place is full to overflowing of one type. If the restrictionist philosophers had had to determine the conditions there would have been one

simple type of life protected in all probability from the rays of the sun whose heat makes possible all this luxuriant excess.

Similarly, we may note the possibilities of variety that are open to humanity in a condition of freedom. There is no possibility of equality in the sense some appear to wish. And the contention which is seriously put forward that because we are the results of evolution beyond our control therefore there should be an equal division of all the wealth is too absurd for refutation. The qualification that this is only on purely rational grounds does not help the suggestion. It is utterly irrational. We may be equally deserving so far as intention goes, and yet very far from equal in our needs. Surely the sparrow is not to be regarded as entitled to an equal share with the eagle. In that way if such a thing could be enforced the sparrow would become a veritable tyrant and robber. And in the question of deserts must be included with regard to humanity the question of what has been accomplished by the unit towards the production of the whole. It is impossible to find words sufficiently condemnatory to

apply to the doctrine that under any conceivable circumstances absolute equality of shares could be just or beneficial to the highest or the lowest. Equality of opportunity is on the other hand but another term for liberty, and it carries with it of necessity the inequality of share and inequality of work and responsibility. Though it need hardly be said that this should correspond with the inequality of ability and fitness which cannot be avoided.

Under the influence of freedom, however, it is possible to find scope for all the infinite variety of tastes with which man has been endowed for his pleasure, as well as for a similar variety of powers by which he has been fitted, as if for the benefit of his fellows. This is equally marked whether we consider his personal capacity or the produce of his hand and brain. But anything in the way of restriction hinders this various development to a greater or less extent. When, for instance, an advocate of restriction in any of its forms discusses the threatened decay which his heated imagination has discovered as affecting the staple trades of the country, and speaks with contempt of the secondary trades which fill up the

blanks, he altogether forgets the path by which he has arrived at his own pinnacle of greatness.

It is not by restriction to simple and unchanging forms that progress is made, but by the differentiation which Nature favours. And this results from freedom to overflow, both in the case of life and of the productions on which human life is sustained. Moreover, in this direction lies efficiency, individual and social. The result of this development is so to divide labour that the individual shall be dependent on his contact with society. But no one will deny the increased efficiency of the whole from this sub-division of duties. What I have seen more than once is a dismal complaint from the advocates of restriction that it is a deplorable thing for a son of humanity to be confined to making a fractional part of a pin. It is curious how those who find free and natural development so objectionable should so suddenly take an interest in the individual the moment they find what they can represent as insulting and restricting his nobility. And they too readily infer that if this individual were not thus engaged he would be soaring

in the higher realms of intellect, if not indeed swaying the destinies of his nation or penetrating the innermost recesses of Nature's secrets.

Further consideration, even without the opportunity of seeing the actual facts, ought to enable them to realise that in their own interests those who have the application or exploiting of labour will take care for humble and simple work to engage persons whose abilities and tastes would not carry them very high in any direction. Such people are both better fitted for simple if monotonous work and less costly to employ. And the making of the fraction of a pin will probably, all things considered, require as much skill and ability as these have to bestow on it: more indeed than they might have developed in a more generalised occupation, which apart from this division of labour would alone have been open to them. Moreover, this occupation is engaged in by them as a means of obtaining their livelihood, and the object they have in view is not to be forgotten altogether in favour of a secondary question. Without the livelihood no development at all is possible. With it there should be time to

spare for exercise of exactly those faculties which afford their possessor pleasure. The ideal of the artist who lives for his art, and by it, is open to very few indeed of us. A sign of evil omen has seemed to me that any degree of such proficiency is so often regarded with indifference unless it will bring money. This is the curse we call professionalism.

That the division of labour makes for social efficiency is true not only in the region of pure economics, the economics of industry, but in other aspects of social and national life. And it is no derogation of liberty that each should do his assigned work, though it may be the duty of one to reason why and of another but to do or die.

The question of questions hereupon relates to the selection of the individuals who shall respectively "reason why" and "do or die." On the determination of this point will depend everything which concerns efficiency (and all else), both in respect of the persons having authority and those who must obey. In the former case the selection itself would be no small matter: that the right man should be secured: the conditions of his obtaining

and retaining his position being not without effect on the manner of the probable comportment of himself. In the case of those who must obey the principles of selection would also have a double effect: the influence of the commander well or ill chosen on their work and their doing of it, and the influence of their own ambition in view of their possible future. There is room for much motive or lack of motive in the doers apart from the inflence of the skill in reasoning why of the commander. There is no possible error of economics (in its widest sense) of which the evil is not a double one: and a wave of evil follows from the disturbance wherever it may be. The restricted outlook of the subordinate who is under a duty to obey and has no motive influencing his mind to do so is contrary to both individual and social efficiency. The unassailable position of an inefficient commander is bad for himself and those under his command for want of the requisite motive in both. And even in the case of an able officer in an army for instance it may be possible to be a worse officer because the soldiers have not in themselves the necessary motive. He may be endea-

vouring to move them "to do or die" instead of doing his own "reasoning why."

During the late Russo-Japanese war an incident was reported relating to a Russian officer who died on the field of battle. The war correspondent described the way in which throughout the day this officer was to be seen in his white uniform here, there, everywhere, heartening his men. Before the day closed, however, he had received his fatal shot. "It was splendid," writes the correspondent, "but it was not warfare."

Another correspondent reported the doings of the Japanese officers while a battle was raging. In a tent stood one of them, who was chief in command, smoking a cigarette, with a map before him, telephones within reach, and *his back to the field.* The italics are those of the newspaper, as I well remember. I give the incident from my memory of reading it.

What was the difference? It is not difficult to understand in the light of the recent history of the two nations then at death grip with each other. The Japanese needed no heartening. To every Jap the war was his own. To the Russian it was

the war of his rulers. This had results in the organisations of the respective armies. Part of the work of the Russian officer was to keep his men in the humour to fight. The Japanese officer was saved that trouble. He was ambitious to know everything that was to be known about warfare in general and the field of his operations in particular. The Japanese soldier was strenuous to do—everything he could think his officer would have him do, and if possible more than his officer could expect him to do, and beyond that —to die. The Russian soldier could with difficulty be got to the war. It was not considered safe to entrust his weapons to him until he was away from his own country. The Japanese soldier who got away from the body of his army hid himself behind rocks not, as might have been suspected of a Russian in those circumstances, that he might desert; but in order to make sure of despatching at least one enemy's officer, though he knew it would cost him his life. From all this, had it been known, the result might have been seen beforehand.

But the underlying secret is not in any cowardice or "cussedness" of the Russian

or any quality in the Japanese that can be called ultra-rational, to say nothing of unreasonable or irrational. It is simply in the direct negative, the flat contradiction, the overwhelming denial of the quoted suggestion from which we commenced our third chapter. The Russian had been suffering from an ever increasing burden of society on the individual. His government has managed everything for him and taken everything from him. He has been policed and officered and cursed with officialism until life is almost a burden to him. His industry has been "protected" by almost prohibitive import duties. His railways are state railways. His government is costly beyond measure, and personal liberty cannot be called his right before the law. Even his religion, as may indeed occur with religion, has been more a means of keeping him down than lifting him up or helping him forward.

Surely if those who cannot fail to see the accounts of the condition of Russia could think, and could apply this knowledge wisely to the things more nearly under their own eyes, we in this country should insist on a cessation of the constant encroachment of government on personal

liberty which we have seen for several decades past: government local and imperial would become less burdensome in its cost: and we should begin while yet we may to apply the principle that government is the servant of the people, serving best by ruling most justly and wisely, and being to the smallest possible extent a burden.

Government, like fire and water, may be a good servant, but is a bad master. It is not difficult to realise that when we think of the motives of the individual. If we have to drive, compel, force him to his work there will be loss of efficiency beyond calculation, for the force we use will correspond in quantity to the opposing force on his part, and only the balance will render service. The friction resistance of your machinery is just the power necessary to be expended before any of the actual work for which you drive it commences at all. Progress in mechanical engineering involves reduction to a minimum of friction resistance. It saves motive power. What must be the resistance in a social machine of which every individual portion contains some of the motive power, if by any means the power

which should help forward is set to move backward; if a load is put on the individual contrary to his inclination? The load he willingly takes upon himself is entirely another matter as we have seen.

And the Japanese individual was very willing to take upon himself all the burden he could carry, for exactly the converse reason to that which prevented the Russian entering the war with any enthusiasm. While the Russian had been suffering ever increasing oppression and the weight of society, the Japanese had discovered his life after the sleep of centuries. It was the burst of freedom which carried him forward to victory. His institutions may not be the most free that are conceivable, but they are very free by comparison with his past, and even with those of nations which have been longer in contact with liberty. Moreover, the awakening and liberty have come suddenly and very recently.

Almost every business man knows by actual experience what stagnation means. And he knows the feeling on seeing signs of life in trade: the alacrity and joy with which he can face his work when it once begins to move. It is only to be

compared with the feelings of mariners whose ship has been aground and who after strenuous efforts see the first signs of getting her afloat. One can imagine the effect of the first yielding in such a case to their efforts: how when the motion is first perceived to be undoubtedly forward a shout goes up, "She moves." Assuming that the freeing of the vessel depended on the pull of the crew it needs no argument to prove that without so much as an orderly cry of "Heave oh!" a disorderly but cheerful shout would rise and the men would double their strength for the pull. We may picture if we like some philosopher approaching with outspread hands and language appropriate to his philosophy remarking, "Moderate your enthusiasm; there can be no rational sanction for such proceeding as this." If an educated and observant man not professing to be a philosopher but knowing the nature of life and of sailors should happen to hear the remark, his answer would be to the point, "Life, my dear sir, simply life."

That is the character of the phenomenon we have been noticing. The force of freedom is an expression to which there

may be metaphysical objection. For the freedom itself is no force. The motive of freedom is something at the back of it. That something is life. But when freedom is applied the force of the life seems to be immensely increased because it is let go. When the shout goes up, "She moves," something seems to send the blood coursing through the veins, the brain and nerves strike fire and the human frame seems too small to hold all the life it contains. That, by the way, is the path of evolution and progress. When liberty is offered to the member of society who has long been held in some bondage, the pleasure of it increases the amount and strength of his life, and he can do more than would have been possible at all before he felt the freedom.

In such cases he makes sacrifices cheerfully which had he been forced to it he would not have made at all. The friends of the Russian soldiers were demonstrative against the separation. Certainly, they had no cause for rejoicing at victory. But if they had found any such occasion the probability is that the benefits would have been too remote in their minds to cause rejoicing. It was openly confessed

that military successes would be bad for the liberties of the nation, and were, therefore, not desired. In Japan, when a day of rejoicing was proclaimed, a woman was found alternately weeping at the loss of her husband and several sons in the war, and shouting, waving her tiny flag for the victory. The instances of thankful devotion and self-sacrifice to country and Emperor which came to light are beyond enumeration. But the principle and explanation of it all needs no further argument. It only needs to be emphasised once more that the individuals did this because they had been set free and not forced to it. To them society or the state is something to be proud of, to be thankful for and to gladly serve, not because it puts burdens on, but takes them off; not because it is their foe, but because it is their friend.

But listen to this as an example of the philosophy which finds favour, and all too unfortunately application also, "The central fact with which we are confronted in our progressive societies is, therefore, that the interests of the social organism and those of the individuals comprising it at any time are actually

antagonistic: they can never be reconciled: they are inherently and essentially irreconcilable."

If I could think that true, the suggestion which came to Job from his wife, "Curse God and die," would quite fail for insufficiency to express the sentiment I should wish deliberately to adopt. I ransack my brain fruitlessly for blasphemy adequate to such a curse if it could be thought in accordance with the facts. As Job himself opened his mouth and cursed his day, so ought we all if a doctrine of this kind could be maintained. But I more than suspect it is on a par with the descriptions of the terrible struggle through which Nature compels us to pass in her evolutionary path and the devastation which marks the course we have travelled, like the wreckage strewn along the line of some Napoleon's retreat from Moscow. This I am given to understand is the condition imposed on the lower creation by their possession of life. But when I listen to the chorus of birds announcing the coming of spring, I wonder if as the sun shines they are suffering any feeling of distress at the struggle through which they are passing, or have passed; or at

the thought of those who have succumbed in the winter to the death which sooner or later overtakes us all. And I cannot help thinking that if this is their condition they have a facility in hiding their real feelings which would do credit to a fashionable hostess.

Why the blue sky is beautiful, and why the fleecy clouds and changing colours add to its beauty; why sometimes the clouds produce gorgeous pictures which the artist may but hope to suggest; why vegetation should afford such visions of loveliness, and Nature should seem to offer landscapes and seascapes of lavish splendour; why even in her sternest moods Nature is sublime beyond description—all these things I cannot tell. And when the scientist explains the wonderful things of life on the ground of simple utility I find none the less room to marvel and admire. But when I find the most wonderful creature of all the children of Nature, whose mind makes him lord of creation; who harnesses not only living animals but the unconscious forces of Nature in his chariots; who thinks and can speak his thoughts, feels and can communicate something of his loftiest

conceptions; who discovers the subtle forces by which he may carry his language from end to end of the earth in a flash; who belts the world with his commerce; who commands Nature to yield her increase in greater quantities for his maintenance; who by unnumbered channels and complicated systems transmits with unmeasured and unconscious co-operation his various productions from every clime to every clime that all may enjoy the most varied yield of every soil; and I am told that the interests of the individual man can never be reconciled with those of his race; that they are actually antagonistic and inherently and essentially irreconcilable; I am driven to wonder whether man is a reasonable being only when he refrains from any attempt to reason. The palpable facts of life are so contrary to the philosophy which alone attains popularity that it would almost seem as if man thinks most beneficially when he does not think at all. Underneath this paradox lies the truth that he is created better than he can create himself, and only needs to cultivate what is best in him.

All this good and much more I see as

the result of the physical, mental, and social evolution which life has produced. And yet I see that the condition of men in society is often such as reason cannot approve while conscience and pity must condemn. Their life is made burdensome beyond that of the beasts; the "leave to toil" which they crave is often denied to them; they are huddled together in crowded courts and streets; the knowledge which is open to them makes no appeal to their understanding; the provision which might be theirs does not reach them or is expended in ways that give no happiness. While vast tracts of land are retained by a few as the haunt of wild fowl and game that they may have sport therein, hundreds of their fellow creatures have not so much as a room or share of a room in which to rest. To own a foot of land would be beyond the wildest dreams of such fellow creatures. These have not even enough to eat, but struggle like vultures over a carcase for the scant leavings and casual gifts of the more favoured.

Of a truth this is not natural. The progress hitherto cannot have resulted from these conditions though it may have

been made in spite of them. Here, surely, we have something outside Nature and her proceedings. It cannot be her doing that a taboo is on such large areas of land forbidding them to be cultivated. Not by any plan consonant with her methods do large numbers stand idle together because the society of their trade has decreed that the rewards and conditions of work are not such as can be approved. It is no unsophisticated scheme of Nature that so many find it more profitable to sit still and do nothing; while others of their species incessantly toil, and yet others would be glad to toil if from their labours they might see an honest livelihood. Nature's own children from the lowest upwards struggle for their living. That is her own condition of progress. Where degeneration occurs with her is among the parasites; showing that they are not children of her approval.

How have we come to this? I can understand enough of Nature's operations and life's advancement to enable me to see how the advance in our knowledge has come about. One after another has seen a new fact or applied a fresh theory until we as a race have reached our present

height. But what of these conditions of wretchedness? I disentangle as well as I can from its labyrinth the answer that is offered to me. Reason, I am told, would stop the progress, though I deny that. But Western civilisation, I am informed, is the result of Christianity. The distinguishing features, it is asserted, are its subservience of the individual to the social organism. By this means it seems the lower are brought into the rivalry on terms of equality of opportunity. I cannot see any such terms of equality. But to the burden of society on the individual I cannot close my eyes. And this I am given to understand is by the sanction of religion; the direct result of Christianity. Such a statement is not to be answered by the usual method of subject and predicate. The appropriate reply must be by exclamation. But the exclamation that is adequate fails me, and the bad words that might be called in aid are not bad enough. Surely all this is an attempt to befool me, and is told to me in irony.

But in the confusion I seem to find that, after all, this conclusion is not exactly what was intended. The doctrine more than hints that the science and

invention which religion by its authorities so often opposed was really religion, and it was laying on burdens to reduce the weight and lighten the load. I ask, then, what is the cause of this deplorable condition of affairs which so far detracts from the happiness of people in civilisation that many have said civilisation and progress were a curse and not a blessing? I am told in reply, "Oh, that is the rule of the stronger!" It is the rule of fools much more likely, fools who contend they can get on faster the more they have to carry, who think that to discourage production will give more to consume, who imagine that to lock up all the land and tools in the hands of government and its officials will increase cultivation and subsistence.

The whole phenomenon is simply this, that the individuals under the power and influence of the life that has been given them are pressing forward in knowledge, industry, invention, production, and all that their life demands, while government in various ways sets up its hindrances under a gross ignorance of its business. It cannot stop progress altogether, but it can create obstruction and much pain,

and periodically it succeeds in holding us back for a time. All the time it militates against the welfare of many under its control. We have called it the rule of fools. Some might suggest we ought to add "and rogues," but of that anon. That in one sense or another they are the stronger cannot be denied. They could not otherwise rule. But whether their strength is ignorant prejudice and numbers, or whether it is brute force led by cunning, or what it is, we will not attempt to determine. But in accordance with widely diffused knowledge it is not. For knowledge is in some sense power, and the total strength of those who suffer by these conditions if rightly guided by knowledge would do away with the blot on our civilisation by which its advantages reach comparatively so few.

The notion that it is natural and according to reason we cannot accept for an instant. The idea that religion or Christianity has brought it about is equally false and objectionable. That society in the form of government should be an increasing burden on the individual may account for much. That is very possible, though it cannot account for progress.

Nor is progress without sanction in reason. So that it is unnecessary to bring in religion to produce progress against reason, even if such a progress were possible. Nor could we hope much for a religion which attempted to secure progress by putting on a load. It would, we may concede, in that case certainly be against reason, but none the more effective for that. The religions we have seen to be at all effective have been motives, not burdens.

We have laboured in vain if it has not been made clear that religion is not contrary to reason. But a great deal has been said and done in the name of religion that has been directly contrary to reason. Religion is a life and force. Reason is a guide and direction. The two things never clash and never did. What clashed with reason was something which was not of the essence of religion at all—to wit, unreason, or foolishness. And that same something clashes against reason in the name of patriotism not unfrequently; in the name of humanity and benevolence; in the name of social science and philosophy. But it is still foolishness by whatever name it calls itself. In the

name of hunger and material wants it clashes against reason and bids men refuse to work that they may be better fed: bids them, because women and children are starving, spend public money on operations which bring no food directly or indirectly; bids them borrow for parks and public improvements money which is urgently required in the channels of trade and industry for the production of subsistence; and calls it making trade; bids them, indeed, levy taxes in the form of a penalty on every sign or exhibition of industry or trade while idleness in all its forms escapes free of taxation; and calls it laying a burden on the individual for the good of society or the community.

We are following up the theory we noticed at the beginning of the preceding chapter as to the respective shares of religion and reason in the evolution of our civilisation; not so much because it forms part of the doctrine there set out; but because it forms so large a part of the doctrine on which government is being carried on. On every side the poverty of the poor is being exploited as an aid to political propaganda. We have what is called altruism facing us on every side.

Altruism means meddling with and managing everybody's business but your own. This is the view that governments, local and imperial, adopt in their proceedings. Their own business would find them occupation enough if they would do it. But they give to that incompetence and neglect it, in order to interfere with our business who must pay their salaries whether we choose or not. A beggar-my-neighbour kind of altruism one would call it.

The doctrine that this is under the sanction of religion finds no justification in facts. That it is not under the sanction of reason is true on another ground than that we have noticed. For reason says, investigate, consider, and understand; do not flout Nature. Religion, indeed, says nothing to the contrary. But it is not a case of reason being with the socialists or restrictionists, and religion overriding reason against them. Such a doctrine ought never to have had the favour it has had. It is a case of both reason and religion against them; together with all the motives of life which they imagine are in their favour. Not less is this the case with regard to all the restrictions

which already militate against the liberty of the individual, and those which are sought to be added as a further burden on the race. Both reason and religion are opposed to them.

That reason and religion alike require the abolition of the restrictions which now stand in the way of the most abundant supply of subsistence, and not the addition of still more, shall be shown in future chapters. That the perpetuation of the race at its best, from its best forms, and under its best conditions demands the freedom under which the best and strongest take their place, has already been seen. That they should not be deterred from either economic or family responsibilities by the burden of society is plain beyond doubt. But freedom for religion itself has often had to be forced on the foolishness which stood in the name of religion against it. And in such cases reason has been the ally of the religion which had freedom on its side; bearing down the religion for the time being which clung to the older darkness against progress.

It is a far fetched but very crude notion that the Christian religion as repre-

sented by its formal authorities has always tended to the freedom by which we have hitherto progressed. The Christian religion in its purity was the representative of liberty. No religion has approached it in that characteristic. But even the wonderful teaching of liberty with which its inception abounded did not render it proof against the foolishness practised in its name of repressing freedom of thought and worship all along the ages since its establishment. Often enough that repression has produced a deadness in which it could hardly be said there was a Christian religion though the form was there. Or should we say the deadness produced the repression? Probably there is truth in both views. For in all these errors there is action and re-action.

But a most important factor is constantly coming to light as we view the history of the Church. We have seen something of the motives which led its adherents to sacrifice themselves not to the Church, be it noted, but to their own inner convictions. Often enough it was in direct antagonism to the Church that they strove so fiercely to spread the light that was in them. Many, it is true, were

willing to give up their life and freedom in the darkness which repression had produced. But it was always some fresh accession of spiritual life which made some strike once more for spiritual liberty. Often, nay, always, it came from the midst of the dead form itself. Savonarolo was a son of the Church. The Reformation under Luther introduces us to a monk of the Church he would shake. John Wesley, to come nearer our own time, was in his early days a priest of the High Church type and as intolerant as any of his kind.

But these men had or found spiritual life. It came to them always, let it be borne in mind, from a glimpse of light. Luther finds a Bible; Wesley finds instruction from Moravian missionaries. And though it often has happened that the character of the man who brought the freedom would not have led him to choose freedom for its own sake, yet the very spiritual life which his intense spirituality has begotten and spread around him has produced the freedom. Life because it is life strikes for liberty, whether personal or political, economic or religious.

But religion taken in a sense wide enough to include authorities has never been the friend of progress that some would have us believe. It has been the free and living section who have kept force and life in religion, not its authorities. The persecutions in the name of religion can hardly be regarded in themselves as marks of its progressive nature. And yet they were signs of the progress. For had there been no life there could have been no persecution. There are periods too dead to produce a martyr. And there have been long stretches of time in the history of Christianity when nothing moved forward in religious matters. These were the times when the burden of authority was having its full effect—the burden of society.

That the Church had as its foundation doctrines, truths which must act as solvents of society cannot be denied. But they were those very doctrines of life and freedom which we are contending are the sole cause and condition of progress in any good sense. The altruism was there, as we have said. And it was the altruism which could operate as a motive: the altruism of the heart which could be

touched with pity. But there was sound philosophy also which cannot always be said for that which appears in these days after nearly 2000 years in which to learn. The two great points of Christian philosophy, and they are practically one—were liberty (the opening of the prison door to them that are bound) and life. Authority was no argument, but truth. And the truth was to make free. While life as an illustrative fact has never been so much used to teach religion and morality as by the Founder of Christianity. Add to this the very living spirituality of the man Christ Jesus and all His doctrines, and there can be no wonder that His religion spread and still spreads. It is life itself and the "liberty wherewith He makes free." But the very altruism was not for the mass, it was for the individual: not the ninety and nine, but the one. Which is another instance of close observation of Nature and mankind, of true philosophy.

To imagine, however, that we can stimulate progress by building the base of humanity on its highest pinnacle, by trying to substitute Christian altruism for

sound economics, is indeed trying to stand a pyramid on its apex.

The physical life cannot be maintained without material provision. Material wealth cannot be produced without effort, to which there must be an inducement moving the person who is to make the effort. Within limits we may fully rely on altruism supplying the lack which misfortune leaves. But that altruism is something which is free and cannot be forced. To attempt to put an obligation of the sort on the individual becomes a burden of society which diminishes the extent to which such altruism may be relied on. In neither case can the altruism compensate for the material subsistence. The lower and more ordinary motives must not cease to operate or there can be nothing at all.

To a limited extent we may subtract from the results of labour what is necessary to maintain government and other authorities, and their dependants who do not produce. But again the limit is important to be borne in mind. We cannot indefinitely increase such a burden. And it is a burden all the time reducing and not increasing the highest altruism

and spiritual life. It is by means of subsistence that life is maintained. Not otherwise can it be increased. It is possible to increase spiritual life at the expense of the animal life of the human being concerned. But only if the individual himself so chooses—only by his will —not by any extraneous authority. And he will only make the attempt when he has seen something above the needs of his animal life. To subtract the means of his subsistence from him will only make him fix his mind the more on those means, and the less on that which is higher.

The only rational plan is to leave him free first to satisfy his lower or animal needs. From the level thus attained he may then be appealed to, not in vain, to climb the higher peaks; but not ere that. Underfed children and casual underpaid labourers are poor ground for the sowing of the seed of truth or of religion. But there is something very rotten in the State where the Church finds it must feed the people before it can teach them or appeal to their higher feelings.

A parliament which has the responsibility and power of governing a great

nation, but finds itself driven to discuss the feeding of the children it compels to receive book learning, ought for a time to be no parliament or place of talking at all, but a place of great silence. Such an assembly has already shown an incapacity for its task which should make it stand aghast at its own incompetence and folly, and consider first what it had better do to repair its own blunders and mischief. Instead of voting itself salaries it should turn to some more honest method of obtaining a living: convinced that if it cannot find the reason for underfed children amidst the plenty that is available: and cannot secure the conditions in which such children will be fed by their parents: then the component parts of the assembly have still to learn the rudiments of their business. And even if payment for such talking services is in the interest of the nation at all the payment cannot be earned by such unqualified quacks as they are without further study and instruction.

PART III.

SOCIAL EVILS VIEWED AS FETTERS.

CHAPTER VIII.

Economic Liberty.

We come back, therefore, to the old fashioned doctrine that the nation can only be fed, clothed, housed and comforted in a material sense by means of labour. And we are forced to realise that we cannot bring on the topstone until we have accomplished some building at a lower level. Science has done much for us, but so far from enabling us to live without effort she has made it clear to us that in that fashion we can only die both physically, mentally, and spiritually, individually, and racially. And the man who tells us we must stop competition is unmistakably no friend of mankind, however much he may desire to be.

This doctrine of the importance of labour is even older than Adam Smith. But he overstated it, for he did not make

it clear that labour alone without anything on which to labour could produce no subsistence. An older writer, Sir William Petty, gave a better proportion to his picture when he said Labour is the father and the earth is the mother, of all wealth. Even that, however, does not tell the whole truth, for in the first place the value of the labour depends supremely on the knowledge and skill involved. Moreover, labour alone without assistance would be powerless to increase Nature's production. By labour Nature's spontaneous produce, whether fruits or flesh, might perhaps be gathered. Such a method of gathering, to say nothing of growing, must result, however, in a very scant allowance without something in the form of capital. For when man first sharpened a flint to be used as a weapon he thereby became a capitalist. Capital is the result of labour exerted on natural objects by which those objects are fitted for use in assisting the further exercise of labour.

This idea of the nature of capital is highly important to be known by all who have to consider questions of public policy. But very few have any notion of it.

Indeed, most people seldom regard "capital" and "labour" as words by which to indicate the very objects which those terms signify. They are accustomed in these days to commence each of the two terms with a capital letter, and this slight change in the form of the word is understood to transpose its meaning from the objects to the owners of the objects. Thus Capital with a capital C indicates capitalists. Labour with a large initial letter stands for labourers. But the process of general confusion in the use of terms does not stop here. For in this terminology, it must not be concluded that a capitalist is an owner of capital, and a labourer one who exerts labour. A capitalist is a person who gets a superfluous income for doing nothing, and a labourer is one who gets very little for doing a great deal. That, at least, is the impression conveyed.

But even that does not by any means exhaust the different ways of distinguishing the two classes. For if a man occupies himself in supervising industry and applying it to definite purposes with a view to obtaining money by sale of what has been produced; so that he and those whose

labour he supervises may supply their own needs, he is part of Capital. He it is who guides the others, who carries the responsibility of seeing that their labour is not wasted on fruitless enterprise, who under most circumstances must bear the loss of any error by which their work is misapplied. And he must usually not only know his own work but be competent at the work of those under him to make him fit for his position. Indeed, he is often on a broad view of the matter the workman and the others are his assistants. Yet he is, we say, no part of Labour but part of Capital.

If, on the other hand, being part of Labour one ceases to engage in the work and begins to collect contributions from the other assistants in order that he may be set apart for the superfluous task of taking care that they do not undertake to work without adequate reward: he is still part of Labour; though he does none of the labouring by which the nation is fed and maintained. Indeed, when one thinks of it he is chiefly and above all others Labour with the large initial letter. He is the representative of a specially selected part of an incomplete generalisa-

tion of labour. Nay, a further refinement than even that is necessary to describe him, for he represents an idea rather than either labour or labourers. The idea is that it is necessary to form combinations of workmen to insist that all who work at the particular trades concerned shall have certain standards of wages. The standards vary, but not with the market promptly and easily: they vary under compulsion from one side or the other of two sets of people—employers and employed—each set combined into a cake or mass so as to move in one body. The two masses are always, so to speak, a little frayed at the edges, there being some in the trade who are quite outside the union or combination. This is to some extent a safeguard for consumers.

Confining our attention, however, to the employed who are counted as Labour it invariably happens that a small percentage of those in the combination are for the time being not employed at all. This obviously must be the case. It is manifestly impossible for any body of men to fix a standard and be able to move the standard automatically at the highest mark at which full employment is avail-

able for all the people of a trade. In fixing it at a level which would be quite sure of attracting employment or, in other words, purchase of services, there would be danger of putting it lower than the rate possible to be obtained. That would defeat the very purpose of combination. The standard is, therefore, put as high as possible leaving always a margin of unemployed. If the margin of unemployed reaches a very low percentage, showing improved conditions of trade, steps are taken to raise the standard, thus increasing the margin.

This margin is itself, however, the very means of depressing the standard. For the existence of a fringe of unemployed men in any trade always operates as a check on the individuals' request for an increase of wages. In the absence of any special and indispensable qualification for the position the workman knows that while there are men of the trade unemployed his place can readily be filled. So that if he is a man of medium attainments he must be content as he is. While a man of superior ability who for that reason can get above the standard rate can clearly have nothing to gain by the

existence of the standard. On the other hand, if this margin did not exist there could be no need for the combination. For when once the whole of the people in a trade are at full work the employers could not threaten their existing employees with reduction of wages, since there would be none outside ready to come in at the lower rate suggested. Unless perchance the representatives should take to that sort of employment again, though they as individuals would almost invariably find better occupation.

Such, however, is the idea which these representatives represent—that it is necessary to have a combination or association with officers and regular contributions for the purpose of seeing that no one works for less than he can get. The units of the society are restricted to certain varying but always relatively high standard rates of payment. To insure their getting wages on these standards would be quite a different thing—that depends on the wages being offered by those who can find use for the labour. A negative restriction against less being accepted cannot secure that so much shall be positively offered.

Apart, however, from the fact that these representatives represent a particular idea, it must be borne in mind that they cannot claim to represent more than the members of their trade who have joined the union or combination; and there are other wage earners of that trade outside. Beyond that there are many labourers even of the wage-earning classes who have no union in their trade at all. Still further, there are those who carry on businesses alone; working shoemakers, tailors, and the like, including hawkers and small shopkeepers; who palpably are labourers and by their labour earn their livelihood, though they are no part of Labour—with a capital L. And finally, there is the awkward fact that the employers themselves go through exertions which they call work, and by which they think they earn their incomes: their income being the surplus after payment of expenses which include taxes, rent (usually rent in the economic sense and often in the ordinary sense), and frequently interest on capital paid to other persons. This surplus is their wage, their only means of livelihood. This, as already remarked, is not Labour at all with a capital, though it

may be labour with a small initial letter.

Adam Smith was responsible for letting the working employers escape from his conception of labourers. Then his abstractions were refined by Ricardo and others until they reached Marx where they were refined to the point of being quite invisible. Without at all clearly defining what he himself meant by labour he took Smith's doctrine that wealth owed its existence to labour, fixed up in his mind a mental image of the abstraction labour which was satisfactory to himself though it was quite without a head, and proceeded to reach some marvellous conclusions. When we see actual labourers going about their duties without heads and performing their duties with any success, we may see a way to dispense with a head to the abstract notion of the sum total of labour, and adopt Marx's conclusions. Until then we had better forbear. For the head of the dullest labourer is a quite indispensable member. This, however, is how so small a portion of the sum total of labour has got itself called, with a capital letter, Labour.

Now, it is unnecessary to argue that we can never find any reasonable, consistent,

or in the smallest degree truthful, doctrines with such loose ideas of what our words mean as have been indicated. And without striving for elaborate definitions, which are always dangerous, we must try to get some conception of what we are talking about. When we speak of labour, then, we mean effort, mental or physical, directed towards the performance of work useful to mankind. We mean all such labour and we recognise that it must always be both mental and physical before it finds expression in work. The most mechanical work requires some brain and nerve, and the highest mental powers can only become effective by physical effort; be it only talking or writing. Moreover, lest at any time it should be thought that our estimate of eloquence is not as high as it should be we had better remark that it is not talking of itself in due measure and reason, against which we have objection. We would let a man be paid for talking without objection if his talk is profitable to others as well as himself. The main question is whether it helps mankind to comfort or hinders them in their pursuit of it.

When we speak of labour it is not to

be understood that we mean labourers. We will endeavour to distinguish between the effort and the man or woman who makes it; a distinction most necessary to be drawn in these days of slovenly, though passionate, rhetoric. And when we speak of capital we do not mean capitalists or any "ists" or persons whatever. We intend to convey the idea of objects on which labour has been exerted to fit them for use or convenience in the production of other valuable objects. In this category we include provision for lodgment and sustenance of all classes of labourers during the period of their labour as well as all machinery and tools, stock-in-trade, and the seed and stock capable of reproduction of vegetable and animal objects. And for these purposes roads and railways are not to be omitted.

But when capital is spoken of as being the result of labour exerted on natural objects it is well to bear in mind whose labour. There is much danger of arguing after this fashion: "This house has been built by labour. The man who lives in it or gets the rent does not labour now. I am a labourer, therefore this house is mine." Of course, it will be said that such

a statement is absurd. Nobody would say anything so absurd. This latter I do not admit. Quite as great absurdities are uttered without protest. The difference between them and the absurd statement just made is that in this statement the absurdity as was intended can be seen and therefore it does no harm. In the other statements much to the same effect the absurdities are there, but being hidden in verbiage they cannot be seen by the limited vision of those concerned, and for that reason are dangerous. The talk of taxing, or to the extent of the tax confiscating, property simply because it is property is quite as absurd in principle. But it needs somewhat clearer vision to see the folly. And the process of exhibiting it is out of our present course.

We came hither, however, in discussing economic liberty and only entered into these digressions by way of making clear to ourselves what we meant by the main terms with which we had to deal. The chief of those terms was labour, by which we meant personal human effort in the direction of producing wealth.

The American economist already mentioned, Professor F. A. Walker, in recog-

nising the fact that employers are themselves dependent on their own efforts and skill for ensuring the profit for which they exploit or apply the labour of others, has put them into a class by themselves. His division of the sum total of economic factors is (1) labour of employers; (2) labour of employed; (3) land; and (4) capital. And in this division the rent of ability has been dwelt upon; or, in other words, the fact that men are of unequal abilities. But divisions which do not coincide with natural boundaries are always liable to shift. So that we cannot make much of this division of labour into two classes. We should have to make another class to include those who are neither employers nor employed, but simply working on their own account. With the result that we get no proper division at all. And we come back to labour as a whole working on land (whether it be in the centre of a densely populated city or in a remote agricultural or pastoral district) with the aid of tools and stock which we call capital.

Now the reward of the whole of the labour engaged in production is the total produce less public taxes, the rent of land,

and interest on capital. On the question of public taxes we shall have a word or two to say in a later chapter. The rent of land we have already noticed as dependent on the inequality in value of land and the margin of cultivation. That also will be referred to again. The rate of interest on capital is dependent on the amount of capital for which its owners are seeking employment. If there is much capital on offer proportionately to requirements the rate of interest goes down. If there is little capital on offer proportionately to requirements the rate of interest goes up, so that it is to the advantage of labourers as such to increase capital to the greatest possible extent. The advantage of the owners of capital as such owners is that there should be as little capital on offer as possible, and consequently that the greatest possible restriction should be placed on its creation. To human beings as consumers of goods the increase of capital is most to be desired so as to make subsistence plentiful. All this is obviously argument against restriction and for freedom if we consider the welfare of the public and particularly that of the poorest.

Among labourers themselves, from the highest to the lowest, the most fortunate director, say to the humblest doorkeeper, there must be some economic laws determining the proportions taken by those in different positions. It is beyond our intention to enter into those considerations in detail. But without doubt the reward of labour in this broad sense must depend on ability and industry, including in these expressions the qualities which go to make up money earning capacity. These qualities are personal to the individual, and have nothing to do with the interest on capital. That is determined on lines of its own apart from the capacity to deal with it possessed by the individual who succeeds in getting control of it. The only way to reach the most perfect distribution and division of the reward of labour is to secure the freest possible competition for all labourers: each to reach the highest position which he is capable of filling: so that those at the top may not obtain an excessive reward by being protected from the competition of those nearest to them: and so on all down the scale.

But we are met by the cry of cheapness,

of which so many are afraid. This is the terror of those already alluded to as existing for the purpose of taking care that labourers do not offer their labour for less than it is worth, as though labourers were possessed with a desire to give their services away instead of selling them. One of such representatives recently joined in a debate in the House of Commons on the subject of Chinese Labour in the Transvaal. His contribution was to denounce what he called cheap labour generally: not only that of Chinese in South Africa, but of people in this country. Such a denunciation was quite naturally spoken of with approval by the Protectionist leader whose creed is supported by a similar terror of cheap goods.

In view of what has been said it is clear that there can be no such thing as general cheap labour. The terms cheap and dear are terms of comparison only. And comparisons can only be made between objects of a like nature. So that when it is said that certain labour is cheap the idea to be conveyed is that it is lower in price than some other labour. Consequently, there cannot be cheap labour generally, that is, cheapness of the whole.

I know there is one suggestion possible on these lines following the wide definition of labour which has just been given, and will shortly notice it. But I cannot allow my own definition to be used against me by those who do not adopt the definition. They must take the definition and argue on it or reject it and argue without it. If all who work are labourers then the reward of the highest will be determined by the same considerations as apply to those below them. But in any case, the remark holds good that cheap labour generally is a misuse of terms.

It is impossible to suggest that those whose life's work is to fight against the danger of cheap labour are actually aware that their whole view is so limited as to preclude their knowing either the nature or the extent of that about which they talk. Obviously, they think their view is a fully comprehensive one, and that labour is limited in nature and extent to the working at fixed time or piece wages for a known and recognised employer. It is equally obvious to most people that this limited view is erroneous. And even if it were true, cheap labour would be a meaningless expression, save as suggesting

comparison with other labour. The same remark applies to the term low priced labour, for prices are low or high by comparison only. It is often contended that the price of any sort of labour ought not to be lower than that of any other labour; which is to say that all should be equal, the skilful and the unskilful, the energetic and the feeble, the industrious and the idle, a contention not worth discussing. The attempt to secure such a condition is to a greater or less extent made as we have seen. And the result we have seen to be the throwing out of employment of a margin who cannot in the condition of the market justify the standard rate of wages.

It is not, however, impossible to discuss relationships of labour with other objects, and by a strain of the meaning of comparison to institute something like a comparison between two dissimilar objects. In relation to the goods or commodities to attain which labour is undertaken it is possible to conceive of the notion of cheap labour as synonymous with dear goods. Since the labour is undertaken to secure goods therefore to make the goods dear is to make the labour cheaper. There is

indeed a double action at work here—on each side of the medium money. To make goods dearer or more costly gives less for the money when earned. But since their being made more costly necessarily involves reduction of the possibility of sale (because fewer are able to buy) it also involves reduction in the demand for labour involving diminished money wages.

That is a line we cannot pursue further, though its conclusion is stronger the further we go. But we may say briefly that much the same considerations as just indicated concerning labour and goods apply to the relationship between labour and capital, as also that between land and labour. Capital, in fact, is only wealth set to produce more wealth instead of being unproductively consumed. Capital scarce and dear when comparing the shares of labourers and capitalists in the result is the same thing as labourers in excess, lacking, however, only the means of production. We cannot get rid of the latter undesirable condition save by making capital more plentiful and cheap, which can only be done by increased production reached by free and unrestricted competition to produce.

Labour in relation to land is cheapened or made less valuable by land being made dearer. Land is made more costly by leaving it in the hands of people who, being already wealthy, do not need its productions. They have every encouragement to retain it unused, since when it is not being used it bears no taxes, nor does it waste, while most of the wealth actually produced is subject to taxation and also wastes if unused.

The conditions of labour are not those of being cheap or dear save by this qualified comparison with land, capital, or goods. These terms carry no real meaning if applied to labour alone, and speaking generally. And it is a degradation of labour to forget that of all the elements of production labour is the only one which inheres in human beings. For a manufacturer considering in what place he shall establish his works it is allowable to ask the question whether in that place he will get a sufficient supply of labour at a price he can afford to pay and yet make a living profit. That is an element he will not forget if he is taking into account all that goes to determine his chance of successfully carrying on the business. But

labour generally must include his own labour. And the question for the whole community to consider is whether its conditions are such as to produce for those who carry on the industry the best reward that is possible.

For the goods which are to be consumed we must give a subsidiary place altogether. They are the reward of the labourers' exertions. The interest and advantage of the community is that they should be abundant for the needs of the people. For the land itself the government is not called upon to sacrifice the people it governs. The best that can be wished for the land is that it should be cultivated. This is not for the benefit of the land but for that of the people. This is too obvious to be mentioned, but it is seldom sufficiently obvious to be remembered. Nor need special regard be paid to capital. That also is something quite outside human beings. Capital is simply the tools by the aid of which the nation does its work and the stock which affords increase.

It will be observed that we are avoiding the muddled terminology under which Capital means employers of labour who carry on industry by the process of buying

or renting of land and buying raw material, paying for its being worked, and selling the finished product. To call these master workers (who good or bad are human beings) by the name of Capital is to reduce the whole subject to a pulp. If we are to arrive at conclusions by the aid of language our language must have some meaning. It cannot be said to have any meaning at all if it does not indicate some concept which is different from the concept of that which is to be distinguished. And this is exactly the difficulty in talking of Capital as indicative of any human beings whatever.

This loose terminology is more productive of suffering and death than is the pestilence. And until it is realised that capital is something outside humanity —something of which humanity is to make use for its own purposes—there can be no hope of sufficiently accurate knowledge of economics to avoid national distress. Nor does it meet the difficulty to contend that what is meant by Capital is really capitalists, and by Labour in fact labourers. We have seen how far the latter expression signifies what is meant by labour. And though it is a repetition

of what has gone before it is important to insist that the opposition set up by the alleged conflicts between Capital and Labour are really conflicts between two different grades of labourers: those who take the responsibility for the undertaking and those who supply only their own services for agreed wages. The capital is something outside both, and may have been supplied by a different set of people altogether.

There are, it is true, those who live entirely on the interest of their capital without undertaking any management or guidance of industry. They do not exploit labour. They succeed in getting a living from their capital without that trouble. The trouble and risk of exploiting must fall on others. In the same way there are those who live on the produce of land without any cultivation of it, though we have no common phraseology for conflicts between Land and Labour. If that ever comes about it must be taken to indicate the conflict of interests between landowners and all the remainder of the community. And there will be more meaning in it than there is in the phrase Capital *versus* Labour as

now used: which does not even mean a conflict between capitalists and labourers.

Capitalists in the true sense may have interests contrary to those of labourers, whether employers or employed. If an implement maker lent his implements out on hire it would be in his interests that all the farmers around him should be without implements for their work, that they might have to come to him for the loan of his. Their interests and that of their labourers or assistants would be that they should acquire implements for themselves or that another implement maker should come into the district. In similar fashion there is possibility of conflicting interests between landowners and the rest of the community. And it is not difficult to understand landowners desiring those conditions in which they can keep the land to themselves except so far as they are paid an annual sum for its use. But the advantage of farmers and labourers alike is that implements and stock should be easy to obtain. And the interest of all but landowners is that land should be easily accessible. The difference between capital and land in this connection is that

capital can be increased if labour is free to do it, while land cannot be so increased.

We had to comment in the second chapter on hindrances against the increase of capital and must return to the subject later. For this chapter, however, let us confine our attention to the question of labour itself in the comprehensive sense we have indicated. By this we mean the efforts of human beings to produce from land by means of stock and implements what they require for their sustenance and comfort. We have seen that the terms cheap and dear are altogether inapplicable to it in this general sense. Its reward is the whole of the produce less the deductions for taxes, rent, and interest on capital. As a means of increasing the reward therefore the wiseacres who follow the doctrines we have discussed and denounced, purposely increase the taxes, impose them in such a way as to increase the rent, and discourage production of capital so as to increase the rate of interest. All these are excellent ways of ensuring reduction of wages.

Labour has three possible conditions, free, forced, and fettered, if alliteration may be used as a possible mnemonic.

Free labour is that condition in which the labourer of his own free will offers his services in the market with such equipment as he has suitable to the profession or industry he desires to carry on. He naturally chooses the part of the market and the person in it who is giving the highest wages that he hears of, and this is the highest and best possible reward that is open to him. Each of the other two conditions in its own way detracts from the value of his services to others of his species, and from his own reward compared with his own enjoyment of the time.

Forced labour, of which we shall notice an instance or two in the succeeding chapter, is that which by one or other compulsory method is forced into a sphere or market to the intended advantage of those who exercise superior power over the labourer. It will not by any be imagined that under such circumstances the wages given are such as would tempt the labourer to offer his services save under the compulsion. The modes it takes upon itself are very various, and the principle may doubtless be traced into many transactions which only partially partake of this compulsory nature. The

corvée or enforced labour impost of pre-revolutionary France is an instance of forced labour for no reward at all. Slavery in the full and ordinary sense such as obtained in America was forced labour under fear of the lash with maintenance, according to the disposition of the master, for wages.

Fettered labour is that of which the compulsion or motive power is the labourer's own desire for subsistence or comfort, but restricted in its application by various contrivances holding it back. Its being held back seems to some people of limited comprehension a means of raising its wages or reward. But this forcible or voluntarily combined restriction or holding back can only result in increased force and impact. The compulsion which in natural freedom would have induced the offer of the labour for adequate reward, and ought in that case to be called simply a motive, becomes much stronger through the attempted restriction ; and eventuates in a condition corresponding very closely to that of forced labour.

Instances of this fettered or restricted labour are found in every country. A

fetter or restriction common to all countries is the method of holding the land by which the actual cultivater of the soil or the actual producer of commodities has to share in some fashion the result of his production with the owner of the land. Another fetter is the interference between buyers and sellers of commodities, chiefly those imported from without the country, for the benefit of the government and the alleged advantage of producers of those commodities within the country. And another is the interference for the alleged benefit of the labourers themselves by outside influences meddling with the prices at which the labourer may or may not dispose of his services.

We shall have to dwell on the two conditions of labour we have called forced and fettered, that is, compulsory and restricted, in order to show their disadvantages. As to free labour, which is the natural condition, what has already been said should suffice to show its superiority over the other conditions without even dwelling on the mischief they produce. There can be no higher or better condition than that in which the labourer works to the limit of his choice

and no further. His choice will go to the length that his freely operating motives of hunger and desire for material comfort carry him; and beyond that as far as his motives of family, patriotism, ambition, or religion impel him. If he is compelled to more than that it is palpable that some other person is hoping thereby to get more of his work than he would give for the reward that is offered, if left to his own choice and to satisfy his own desires. On the other hand, if his efforts are fettered or restricted it is clear that immediately the restriction is imposed he ceases to get as much as he would choose. For by hypothesis he would prefer to do more in order to get more, but is hindered by one means or another. And beyond that he finds that the motive power within him being dammed back now comes as an uncontrollable flood and itself forces or compels him to a condition corresponding to that which in the other case is reached by outside compulsion. He does not feel that he is being adequately paid, but his circumstances since the restriction leave him no option or possibility of declining what is offered. So that this also reaches a state below that of freedom.

CHAPTER IX.

Labour Forced and Restricted.

WHETHER or not the poll tax or hut tax imposed by "white" government on the native coloured population in the neighbourhood of gold mines is justifiable on ethical grounds depends altogether on the standard of ethics by which it is judged. It accords well enough with the ancient tradition of warfare and aggression by military powers. It was the usual course on conquering a country to claim it and its people as in effect the property of the victors. The land was theirs, and the condition on which the people to whom it had belonged might remain in it was that they should serve their conquerors. The vanquished might even be compelled to go as slaves to the land of their masters. And whilst the usages of war justified the slaying of the fallen, it might be contended that merely to make slaves of them was a merciful concession.

Among civilised people it is now established that when an enemy has ceased to fight he must be taken care of as a prisoner of war until proper arrangements can be made for his release. So that slavery on such grounds is no longer the right of the successful warrior. We still take the country of the defenceless and call it ours. But we usually find some plausible account of the transaction other than that of sheer annexation of something which belongs to others. We go to protect the people for instance—we call it a protectorate for a seemly period. And we do not admit the institution of slavery on our soil—by that name. So that we could not carry away the people whom (by claiming their land) we protect.

But having got their land there are frequently other means of obtaining their services. That is palpably the case when there are mines requiring labour. The owners of these mines are of course willing to pay certain money wages. And there is practically no other opportunity for the natives to obtain money. So that the compulsion on them to pay a poll tax in money has a direct tendency to cause them to offer their labour at the mines.

A hut tax is effective to the extent of the existence of huts, but can be escaped by dispensing with the possession of that luxury. From the poll tax there is no escape, and under the circumstances it answers, with something more of decency, all the purposes of the cruder slavery. The dominant race thus gets both the land and the labour of the natives.

It is not intended here to defend the method. It has already defenders enough who point out the blessing of being compelled to work: just as in more civilised lands the representatives of territorial and religious establishment have long striven to show the hungry peasant the thankfulness that is due from him for his poverty and the consciousness of his station. We may dismiss that aspect of the question with a certain amount of indifference, whether in the disturbances which occur in the collection of the poll tax the natives or the police get the best of the struggle. But at least the method has the merit of being intelligent and intelligible. The hut tax is somewhat objectionable from all points of view. It can be escaped by the native who is lazy enough not to build a hut.

The poll tax is, however, a clear and definite command to go and work in the mines wrapped up with an inducement to earn something more than the amount of the tax. The surplus he may use for the purchase of "firewater" in the form of vile spirit; or it may be, on more ambitious lines, a good supply of wives to maintain the labourer in future idleness. There can be no mistaking the motive or the operation of the motive in this case. The native may in a few instances elect to have a riot with the police, but in the long run he must submit. And the operation of the tax does definitely facilitate and increase production—from the mines. Whether on the whole it tends to civilisation and a higher standard of life is an altogether different question. It may well be doubted. And, as mentioned in the preceding chapter, it is clearly and definitely a deliberate attempt to compel the labourer to give his labour for a smaller reward than, if he were left to his own free choice, would tempt him to sell his services.

Now it may be at once admitted that the people in whose interest this is done can scarcely be called labourers themselves

in that country. They are to it, an altogether alien people, who have succeeded in becoming in the first place landowners in it, and in the second place owners of capital. For it should be borne in mind that the gold mine sold on the London Stock Exchange is frequently a claim to a piece of land in which gold is supposed to be: but not a spade has been put into it in actual trial, to say nothing of production. The plant for developing the land and extracting the gold comes afterwards, if at all. So that here is a contrivance for the benefit of absentee landlords and capitalists who are first of all landlords and not under any aspect industrial employers in the ordinary sense.

Such a poll tax on uncivilised natives may without much apology be characterised as a dishonest proceeding on the part of a modern government. It ought to be enough that, in what must be regarded as the natural course of events, we take their land in order to make what we believe to be better use of it: without our compelling them by any means to assist us in obtaining what we value so much more highly than they do. If they gradually recede before us and leave us

the land to use in our own fashion the least we can do in justice to them is to leave them in enjoyment of what we do not require. Making them contribute to our wealth in addition is flagrant wrong. That we are anxious to train them in industry is a contention of the sort that is briefly expressed by the word cant. The natural development for them would be an occupation more clearly like their old life, than working in a mine with its frightful mortality.

The interest of this matter to us at present is simply as an illustration of forced labour. And when we are told that in the course of centuries a fund of altruism has been accumulated (by the religion which long ago abolished slavery and is proceeding to hasten the progress of the race by this, that, and the other restriction on industry) we are tempted to say, "Do let us look at the facts." Long after the time at which slavery was supposed to have been abolished this nation was guilty of a proceeding with regard to negroes compared with which the slavery of old was fairly humane. Somehow the fund of altruism which many seem to imagine is the only hope

of the people's salvation is very badly distributed. And neither the understanding of its operation nor its actual practice seems by any means to be monopolised by those who talk most about it. Certainly, however, it is not yet sufficient in quantity to prevent the adoption of the most convenient means that present themselves, to the stronger in ruling power, to enforce the labour of the weaker ones, at a rate of reward less than that at which the weaker ones would freely offer their labour. The means must differ from time to time and from place to place according to the circumstances: but the one principle remains throughout of compelling the weaker to work for the stronger with or without wages.

This is in no way antagonistic to the view expressed in a previous chapter that certain undesirable conditions usually attributed to inferior strength are really the result of folly. We have still to refer to those conditions. The hut and poll taxes we have mentioned are applied with intelligence and answer their purpose, which is to enforce the supply of labour. In this case the purpose does not commend

itself to our benevolence or sense of justice, though we admit the intelligence and efficacy. The conditions which produce restricted labour are, on the other hand, the effect of inability to trace cause and effect. They result from the failure, by those whose good intentions we do not question, to choose those arrangements which are best for the body politic. The power to adopt the arrangements is undoubted could the knowledge be given.

The most serious and at the same time the most astounding matter is that so many should be pursuing a policy of restricting the application of labour, in the hope that the lot of humanity or of the particular labourers concerned will thereby be improved.

The forcing of labour in its various forms we may leave. The restricting of labour is a more surprising phenomenon.

Understanding labour in the wide and only complete sense already indicated, we find a restriction on it in the taxes which are almost general on trading between country and country. On any conception of labour the result is the same in this respect. A government has by one means or another, not here to be discussed,

obtained control of a district. It ordains that the people in that district shall not buy what they need or desire from without the area, save on condition of paying certain penalties or duties on the importation of the goods. To enter into the arguments for and against this proceeding would take us out of our way. Briefly expressed, it is a restriction of labour. The people who work for a living in whatever sphere of employment naturally endeavour to find the market in which they get the best price for their productions; and equally as a matter of course endeavour to buy their goods at the lowest possible rate; quality and all other circumstances considered. We dealt quite sufficiently on this point in the first chapter. And despite many questionings of the principle which are to be found in print we must avoid going further into the subject. In every case when the tendency is doubted the doubt arises from imperfect realisation of the motives of those who have to make the selection of place in which to buy or sell, or from omission to note all the circumstances.

If the worker discovers that he can get a better price for his productions by

exporting them, or buy his raw material or his subsistence at a lower price outside his own country than he can within it, he naturally trades beyond the border. That is his means of obtaining the best livelihood that is possible to him. It is absolutely proved to him by figures about which, for his own sake, in a business which he understands, he will be careful not to make a mistake. He trades thus, we should have said, if his government will allow him. His government seldom allows him to do so. But to say that it is for the good of the people not to allow them so to trade is palpable nonsense. It is simply a part of the burden already discussed which society lays on the individual, or, translated into more intelligible language, the burden of government on the people.

Added to the burden of the government itself is that of its beneficiaries, these beneficiaries being not always openly maintained out of public funds. The extra officials required to superintend the details of trade so as to obtain the tax are part of the burden. But the burden of landlordism is made more onerous by the restriction against buying beyond the area

owned by the landlord. An additional burden arises from the monopoly in certain hands which this sort of taxation fosters.

The restriction is ostensibly in favour of the home producer. But its operation can only favour the owners of land and capital. The human producer, who is inevitably a consumer also, must be injured by it. The tax must eventually be paid by the consumer if the trade is to be a continuing one. The trivial arguments as to who pays the tax are unworthy of being answered in a discussion of fundamental principles. When trade is going on there is a certain amount of impetus which will often carry it beyond the point at which it is profitable. Sometimes it will be carried quite over the unprofitable period to a time of greater prosperity. During the unprofitable period the tax may be paid by producer or trader to his own hurt. But if he knows it, he stops that proceeding as quickly as he can. And if he can afford to stand idle the consumer must show him some very handsome profits besides the tax before he emerges again after once he has ceased his operations. This is human nature all

the world over, the ordinary motives of mankind. In the long run the consumer must from the nature of things pay all the cost of bringing the produce to his market (beyond what some foolish and dishonest government gives as a bounty) or go without the produce. When he dies of starvation he goes without.

But since the labourer is a consumer (and labours that he may consume) the tax on what he would buy is a restriction on the object of his labour. It is, moreover, a fetter on his operations, for it hinders the purchase by others of his productions. They can only buy by selling their own produce. In both ways, therefore, it hinders him in obtaining the fullest reward that is possible for his labour.

The restrictions on labour do not, however, end with this sort of mischief as so many seem to imagine. No otherwise can we interpret a tax claimed from the subject on the occupation for instance of a house. The result of such a tax must be on the one hand to hinder the occupation of houses: crowding the people together to the detriment of their health. On the other hand, it must discourage the appli-

cation of labour to the erection of houses. The people are worse housed through the restrictions on sale of labour already noticed, and by other restrictions which we have still to notice. But the government in its local areas adds here a further restriction by the imposition of its taxes. Taken on the average of large cities and populous places the rent at which a man and his family might hire a house from those who have bought the land, made the road, and built the house, is increased 50 per cent. by the local taxes (including water supply), and in many places the increase is still more. This is by no means the only way in which local authorities hinder the better housing of the people, as we shall see in another chapter. But it is another example of what may be called fettered labour.

The subject of taxation is too large to be dealt with here in detail. But the aspect of it to be brought into prominent notice here is that the taxes now imposed in this country all operate as a restriction against labour, and consequently reduce the sum total of reward which labourers should enjoy. An income tax seems to most people a very righteous imposition

on the person who works hard enough to earn a sum exceeding a defined amount each year. A house duty on the occupation of a house reaching a certain value per annum is regarded as only just. A stamp duty on the transfer of property from one to another, and a customs or excise duty on what are termed luxuries, are treated with the same respect. We will not here discuss the equity or iniquity of any of these taxes. But they are one and all a fetter or restriction on labour.

Part of the produce of labour is taken from those who have produced. And though some will doubtless contend that labourers of all grades will continue their occupations as strenuously as if no such taxes existed, or work the more vigorously to obtain means to pay the taxes, such a contention shows a failure to consider the motives which influence human beings.

There is no doubt that an official will not be deterred from asking for an increase of salary by the fact that one twentieth of the advance will be taken as income tax. But this class of people is not the class whose welfare need concern us; nor can we regard them as exhibiting a good example of the incentives to production.

Initiative is not for them in their own personal capacities. And it is easy for them to regulate their own expenditure to accord with their salaries. Those on whose motives the body of the people depend for their welfare in a material sense are those who engage in fresh enterprise, enlarge their premises, add to their means of production, erect housing accommodation, and display industrial operations. Such people cannot hide their proceedings. And the result is a claim for taxes not to be escaped.

There are many who seriously think that this abstraction and expenditure of money by the government does actually increase trade. And they carry their doctrine far enough to believe that the more money is thus abstracted the more will trade be increased. Some of them (named Socialists) go to the logical conclusion and hold that if the government abstracts all the money, there will be, if not the greatest amount of trade, at any rate the greatest amount of comfort. For, of course, the government will spend it, and that itself, whether any food is produced or not, will, they think, feed the people. The entire disconnection of the exertion necessary to

earn it and the motive impelling to that exertion in no way disturbs their serenity.

Nor is any better understanding possible to them from being told that the government under such circumstances is not only no motive to exertion, but a very definite hindrance. They still contend that men will learn to work harder for millions of people they have never seen or known, including highly paid officials, and luxuriously maintained recipients of interest on public debt, than they will work for themselves and their children. They do not deny that men who have a direct interest in the result of their work, as in the case of piece work, work harder than those who have no such direct interest. Indeed, their complaint is that men in such circumstances make slaves of themselves; they work too hard and produce too much. When the work is paid for by time rates the master must, and admittedly does, keep a sharp look out to prevent the men idling their time. Complaint even is made of this, and the more leisurely pace allowed to public employees is held up for imitation by private persons.

But it is pretended that the employee

who thus needs encouragement to his industry by a person he knows, whose needs and difficulties he also knows, would do very differently for the whole community. He is leisurely enough at present whenw orking for a public authority, but then he would act quite otherwise. For a vast community he could not know he would assiduously strive to waste no moment of time, and no fragment of material. That, at any rate, is the way their theory works out. But do they really contend this ? One is compelled to ask with some doubt. Or do they on quite other grounds set up the contention that if government owned everything it would then be possible to do less work, and have more pay? Their view is that the best means of securing abundance of all good things is to combine to do as little producing as possible for the money. And they realise from observation that government excels in that direction the finest organisations ever invented outside government. They forget, or do not care to remember, that if all were living on taxes there would be none to pay them.

If, on the other hand, we believe that wages must be earned and goods must be

produced, and that a man would sooner spend his money than let the government spend it for him, we are bound to realise that for the government to take his earnings from him is a discouragement to the extent that the earnings are taken. A tax taking away the surplus value of the better land over that of the inferior land could do no such thing. For it does not take his earnings. It only equalises his earnings with those of another man who has worked equally hard with equal skill on another piece of land. Such a man is willing to come to this piece of land and pay the additional tax without feeling or thinking that the tax has taken anything from him at all.

There is no other tax of which that may be said. And the taxes now levied on occupation of land and its improvements for business purposes are in every case an abstraction of a portion of that which is paid, through the profits of business, for the labour of the tax payer. The labour may have been aided by capital of his own or some other persons without affecting the fact that it is labour which has been taxed. When, therefore, a responsible labourer of the employing

class has to consider whether he will increase his enterprise and responsibility, he has to bear in mind what cost per annum will be added in the form of local and other taxation. He knows he will add to his care and trouble by increasing his operations. But one of the factors in his total cost to be provided for will be taxation. Giving ourselves the ease of an abstract conception we may see that the total cost of government in every form is (in the way taxes are now assessed) an expense for which a fund must be provided between the original producer and the final consumer. The total of all the comfort consumed costs just the total expense of government more than is paid to producers. Exactly so much could be saved by consumers (or paid extra to producers, which is equivalent) if government could be carried on for nothing; or could be kept up out of that surplus value of land which is known as economic rent. Such cost of government imposed on the present basis of taxation is a fetter or hindrance on labour, to its whole extent. For the total must be produced in addition to what labourers of all grades would have to produce for their own benefit.

We do not distinguish on this method whether the consumer pays more or goes short. To a large extent he goes short of the comfort. But the hindrance is there, nevertheless. And those who imagine that nobody thinks of the taxation as a burden or that nobody refrains for that reason from undertaking more operations simply do not know the conditions. Reference has been made to the local tax on housing. We must not digress now into that channel. But the amount of rates to be allowed for out of the rent (in the ordinary sense) is one of the most obvious deductions to be made in fixing the value of a building. And on that value, and the possibility of selling at the price, depends altogether the question of whether more houses will be built. It is the great factor, therefore, influencing the abundance and quality of housing accommodation; as also the demand for the work of, and supply of wages to, those whose business is to build more houses. These fiscal restrictions on the exercise of labour are one and all fetters on labour, and reduce the total amount available for the reward of labourers.

But this is not all. We have already

noticed how this method of imposing taxes enables the owner of land to retain it unused and free of taxation, while if he uses it he must pay the tax. The subject is too large to be dealt with here as a mere incidental case of motives moving men generally to the production of human subsistence. We can, however, point out that it forms one great division of the methods of restricting labour. For as a tax on imports hinders trade between countries, and therefore hinders the production which such trade fosters, and as a tax on every method of earning subsistence by labour discourages the operations of labourers, so the absence of a tax on the ownership of land enables the owner to keep the land out of use without actual loss. If he is wealthy enough the profit he would get is of so little importance to him that he prefers to hold the land for the sake of power, unless he can get a much larger advantage by reason of the fact that his land contains minerals or is near a populous centre. In any case, however, it is a restriction on labour.

One other fetter on labour in connection with taxation exists but must have the barest possible mention here. The fetter

is the existence of public debt. Irregularity of trade through an imperfect system of currency might detain us, but we will pass by that also, and observe the restriction on labour to the injury of labourers at which we glanced in the previous chapter.

There are those who profess to see some distinction in principle between protection in the commonly accepted sense (taxes to keep up prices and to "make work") and the protection of the interests of labourers by combinations to prevent prices of labour going down. We may reasonably call this taking care that labourers avoid doing too much for the money. But the distinction between these two sorts of protection is without any difference to justify its existence. The only ground for any connection between free trade and trade combination to regulate prices is that there is a sentiment in favour of both that they are beneficial to the lower classes. In the case of free trade there is solid ground for the sentiment. In the case of labour restricted to certain prices and conditions of work there is no such ground.

The argument has been put forward

that free trade is the best and most equitable method of distributing wealth, and since trades unionism is a means of more equitably distributing the results of production, it is one in principle with free trade. I apologise for repeating such a contention in a book intended to be serious. But since there is no other argument seriously pretending to support the doctrine I must bring forward such as there is. It appeared in a London newspaper of standing and influence.

Free trade as a theory has nothing whatever to do with finding just and equitable distribution for the results of production. It is the doctrine that a man, that is, a labourer of whatever grade, will get most for his labour if you allow him to sell what he has to sell in the place he chooses for himself, and permit him to buy wherever he likes what he wishes to procure with the result of his labour. In that case he will of his own accord sell his labour or produce where the best money reward is offered him; and he will without compulsion endeavour to obtain the most abundant subsistence that such a money reward will afford; by buying it in the place where it is most

freely offered in proportion to the money. By that means only, the doctrine says, can the nation attain the largest and most widely distributed amount of comfort, and the most abundant supply of material wealth for the supply of its physical needs.

The doctrine that those employed by others in a particular trade should combine to protect themselves against the tyranny and other undesirable qualities of their masters is quite otherwise. Indeed, it is to the effect that a man will not of his own accord seek to get the best money reward for his labour. It argues that unless prevented from doing so he will give his work for less than he could get. In the same way as does the protectionist, the producer, under this delusion, considers his interest to be that he should check competition. He cannot as in the other case secure arrangements by which the labour of his competitors is, with its results, kept out of the country. He therefore peacefully persuades his competitor not to offer his labour at the price at which the demand exists. Thus both of them find themselves producers

not producing, though they cannot altogether avoid consuming.

While I have been writing the foregoing pages I have frequently had to pass the house of a man who is something more than an acquaintance to me. Work has been slack with him for some time as I know, though he is hardworking and in every respect steady. He seems to have succumbed to the temptation of an opportunity to better his condition by working at some distance from his home. I am not familiar with the details of his engagement. But for some time his window was boarded up. And I am told that a large crowd assembled near his house, that mud was plentiful, and stones not a few, the result being broken windows. The crowd, I understand, was dispersed by mounted policemen. But some half score or so of policemen, as I can personally testify, were left there and constantly relieved by a similar number of officers for some weeks : in order to guard against a recurrence of this mode or result of peaceful persuasion. My friend and his companions were also escorted by a number of constables to and from their work to

enable them to avoid peaceful persuasion on the way.

Now no one can be more indignant than I am at seeing an argument carried by expressions which insinuate more than is true, or sentiments calculated to smother sense in passion or sympathy. And I do not suggest that the persuasion of which I have seen the signs (which can only be called peaceful by a—misdescription) is to be regarded as the only kind of persuasion that ever takes place in such cases. But two or three things I do suggest. Persuasion by one or a number of men exerted on a member of their own trade to disregard what he thinks are his own interests in favour of what they suppose to be theirs, is more than likely to be successful if it is to remain peaceful. In other words, peace will be secured by his yielding his own inclinations and advantage to theirs. If he does that, surely a wrong is done to him by the peaceful persuasion, though it may not have reached the point of stones and mud, or even that of a daily police escort to and from his occupation. Given a man who persists in a course which a number of men consider inimical to their interests,

and given the right on their part to persuade, ask, plead with, or request him to desist; given also the fact that they stand unoccupied while he, as they regard it, takes their work; and we have a condition of affairs in which the Attorney-General himself could not maintain peace day after day during a strike. These men day by day get up a trifle more exasperated, and their wives and children a little more hungry every day.

There is no cure for the condition, but to let such men understand that their whole proceeding is a mistake, that they do not benefit themselves now or in the long run by combining to set a standard of prices higher than the market freely offers. But in the absence of so much sound economics (which has first to reach the Universities and public leaders generally) it does seem desirable to minimise the evil as far as possible. This can only be done by adopting the position that when a man refuses (by himself or as part of a number) the terms of employment that are offered to him, he must leave others at liberty to take those terms or not at their own inclination. That he should inform the newcomers of the

existence of a strike, is quite sufficient to indicate his desire that no newcomer should take the employment. From that point it requires courage to enable the "blackleg" to proceed. At least, it requires moral courage. For with the clearest possible conscience as to the right of his own conduct he knows he is doing an unpopular act. Moreover, it requires physical courage. For even admitting his knowledge that he cannot legally be assaulted or molested, he also knows that when men's antagonism is aroused they do not always obey the law.

And when a man's courage is required to enable him to do what he regards as his duty in his own interests, it is a sign that he is by one means or another being intimidated. The very fact that one can speak of courage in connection with it proves that there is something to fear. To intimidate him from wrong is no interference with his liberty. But to intimidate him from his rights is to do him an injury. It is, at least, to rob him of his freedom.

So that we are brought face to face with the question, Yes or No, shall a number of men be entitled to say that a particular master shall carry on business

no longer? Shall the whole of the plant and material prepared for a certain kind of work be made to stand still at the will of a certain number of men who are dissatisfied with the conditions, though others would gladly work under those conditions? There is no stopping-place. Shall a man have the right to work, or shall a combination of others have the right to stop his doing so? The very clamour that is raised for the right to taboo the operations of those who have made themselves obnoxious to the union is the very reason why no such right should be entrusted to them. I have given a single instance of what is done against the law under these circumstances. But the representatives of the restrictive idea we have described have demanded with a vehemence that was unseemly, increased rights to peacefully persuade against work. Above all, the funds which are accumulated for the purposes of their restrictions they have insisted shall be held sacred from any claim on the part of those injured by the restrictions.*

* The passing of the Trades Disputes Act is a strong indication of two things. Its passing the House of Lords after the plain, emphatic declaration of the persons controlling the majority of votes there that it was altogether bad legislation, shows the futility and mischief of a second chamber such as exists in this country. If they had not said they disapproved we should not have had

No disrespect is offered to the working classes by these remarks. Carlyle, with his reiterated admiration for work, was never more sympathetic towards honest industry. It is not the work of the workers, but the restrictions against working which I abominate—the hell-made doctrine that a man should be hindered from working at anything below a price fixed by another. Indeed, it is this man's liberty about which I am more concerned than I am about that of the masters against whom the Union sets itself, although I mentioned them

any proof of their dishonesty, though we might have thought them untruthful if they had said they approved. As it was they proclaimed their own iniquity. They said, "We know it is wrong, but we are going to do it." The passing by both Houses showed in each case the potent effects of noise and shout in some circumstances. The Trades Unionists do not constitute a majority of the workmen called wage earners; still less of the working population. But most of the sound and fury comes from them. That is why they are obeyed by both political parties in this country and both Houses of Parliament. Carlyle was doubtless right when he spoke of the "noble, silent men silently thinking, silently working, whom no morning newspaper makes mention of," as "the salt of the earth." But there are times when even they should make a noise. Once, years ago, I had to start out long after nightfall with a guide to seek a friend who had taken a wrong turn in the mountains, and had not arrived as he was expected. The innkeeper called after us as we started on our midnight tramp, "Make some noise as you go up." I can vouch for the noise, though I did not make it. But here is a whole nation gone astray. They hope to attain more comfort and increased consumption by checking and restricting production. They have taken the wrong turn and got lost. Worse than that, those who make most noise are luring them further from the right path to their destruction. The noise is not so sweet as I have always imagined the voice of the Sirens to have been, but it has a similarly evil effect. It is time for the noble silent ones to begin making some noise. I meet them in numbers day by day. They know the path. They see the evil of the wrong turning. But they are not "spouters." They can only work. They, too, however, must begin to talk and shout if distress and disaster are to be avoided.

in the preceding paragraphs. To tell me a man can be called free who is to be subject to the peaceful persuasion of a number of men who from the very nature of things must at that time be angry (though the anger may be subdued and therefore the more to be feared) and who are bent on his not taking his own course is to insult my intelligence. Nor is it the full grown, responsible men with wives and children who are most to be feared in any question of this restriction. These men know too well the waste and disadvantage to themselves of this method. Those most to be feared are irresponsible lads and young men who have no ties, no standing expenses such as rent, no dependents; who are frequently in a position to live on their parents' bounty. These are the peaceful-persuaders. And when members of the legislature vote, at the bidding of a number of representatives of an economic error, for the right to be given to these irresponsible young ruffians to exercise their powers of persuasion, the least I can wish such members is that they had actually to earn their living with their own hands in manual toil. That they would have courage enough to

do so against the peaceful persuasion of the restricters in their trade is disproved by the obedience they now yield to the peaceful persuasion of these representatives of the restrictive idea.

It is easy for those who are above the reach of want to be sympathetic to the masses by obeying those who (on the ground of being maintained by particular sections of labourers to talk on their behalf) arrogate to themselves the right to speak for "Labour." These representatives are the men the wealthier people see and must deal with. It is much more difficult and requires far greater courage to champion the cause of those who are injured by the fetters put upon industry by the carefully contrived hindrances to employment. It would demand bravery on the part of wealthy people to mention the starvation which comes of the restrictions imposed ostensibly for the benefit of the workers. It is imagined more substantial wages can be obtained for those who join to impose these restrictions. It is easier to submit to the aggression than to resist it. But specific cases of men who have been injured by the tyranny of their unions can be brought in

abundance. And the unpopular attitude would be the truly benevolent one.

It is contrary to all sound principles that any body of men can be benefited by hindering others from selling their labour or services. That may do well enough for a few who can be paid for organising the restriction. But it cannot benefit the mass of men in any trade. And whatever may be said of the combinations as combinations it is certain that the restrictive idea, even under peaceful persuasion, or no persuasion at all, is bad from the beginning. This says nothing of combination as such. One case of a highly skilled trade can be named in which the chief officer makes it his business to gather all the information relating to the trade and disseminate it at the union meetings. That man earns his money. But he explains how that it is possible with the improved means of production in the trade to work for lower prices (it is all piece work) and get better wages. Such intelligence is unusual and singular. Another highly skilled trade has its own means of production, and shares the profits on an equitable basis with the founders of the business. These are not under the

restrictive idea at all. Co-operation is well and most desirable. There can be no objection to working together. The objection is to stopping together. It is more objectionable still to stop others. So far, for instance as a trade union acts as a Friendly Society it is entirely beneficial. It is when it begins to tamper with gauges and meddle with prices that it does mischief.

The notion of persuasion and its peacefulness sent us off at a tangent. We began to compare this protection of labour with the idea of free trade. All we have seen, however, proves how diametrically opposed the two doctrines are. But protection in the ordinary sense is applied laterally, and protection of labour vertically. Free trade says every man had better be trusted to search out the best market open to him whether he buys or sells, without any interference to keep up prices of produce. Protection of labour says that a man is not to be trusted to seek out the best employment that is open to him; that he will compete and compete and compete like a woman bidding against herself at an auction sale lest she should lose the article on which

she has set her heart; and that by his competition he will bring down his wages below a minimum of bare subsistence. Is this human nature? Do those who set up the doctrine altogether forget what men work for? Or do they see that men seldom realise adequately their own motives and consequently are easy to make believe for ulterior purposes the danger of that which does not exist? Briefly and colloquially which is it, ignorance or humbug?

This doctrine ignores the tendency of human beings, even employers, to seek profit and advantage from their work. It forgets that in a condition of freedom if employers are getting more than affords an average interest on their capital with a reward for their trouble in accordance with their abilities, there is a tendency for others to take up the production offering more for labour and offering the productions more cheaply. It forgets that employers compete against each other as other men do, and that to leave as many employers in the market as possible is better than making the conditions such that some must give up business.

All this striving to protect labourers is

opposed to the free trade principle that every man seeks the best employment (safety and all other circumstances considered) that is open to him. And just as the protectionists imagine there should be an army of officials to take care that goods from abroad do not come into the country untaxed, and thus establish competition with labourers at home; so the trade unionist imagines that it is necessary to have a number of officials maintained by the workers, to ensure that the workers do not offer their services at too low a price. They fear to increase the competition between labourers, whereby, as they think, prices will come down to nothing.

The doctrine ignores not only the tendency of employers to increase their competition when profits rise, thus benefiting employees and consumers, but also it ignores the tendency of employees individually to insist on the highest rate of payment that is available. The notion that prices of labour will come down to nothing because produce is cheapened by the competition is palpable error. The more abundant the subsistence the less obligation is the labourer under to offer

his labour for sale, and consequently the better must be the reward which can tempt him. His only purpose is the subsistence. That he gets it the more cheaply is itself one half of what he strives for. His consequent comparative independence enables him to exact the better price. But all this involves the greatest possible freedom for the effort to produce, the most unrestricted competition to supply subsistence. For this subsistence is the real wages of labour. The effort is made for this and the accomplishment is better the more free the striving is allowed to be. This is the cheapness of abundance not the low price of bad quality or adulteration. The latter is not cheapness at all, though it is the only condition to which the restrictionist ever attributes the term.

This particular restriction on labour is, it appears, now to be fostered by the British nation through payment of members of the House of Commons for their attendance. There is no other argument for the payment that is proposed. There is no lack of candidates willing to enact the laws reasonably shown to be the best for the common weal. But the member who,

as already mentioned, denounced cheap labour generally, was heard a few days afterwards telling an audience that he had been trying to live in London on fifty shillings a week, and found he could not do it. He had been told that there were ways by which members of Parliament could earn money, but before he would earn money in those ways he would give up his place altogether. It was a serious threat. But probably it would be better that he should carry it out than remain to teach the country bad economics and unsound social philosophy.

The mother country cannot afford to indulge in a method of government by which her colonies have wasted their resources and hindered the development of the magnificent territory which their governments rule. And it is under no necessity to imitate the colonies in paying legislators. The British House of Commons has for one of its functions, and that the most important, the granting or withholding of supplies to the Crown or Executive Government. They represent the taxpayers and are there largely to secure economical government and equitable taxation. That, indeed, is their great

power: redress of grievances preceding and conditioning the granting of supplies. But what sort of a check on lavish or wasteful expenditure is to be expected from a House composed of members every mother's son of whom is a salaried officer of the Crown? Well might Mr. Gladstone express a hope after his mission to the Ionian Islands that the payment of members would be the last change in the Constitution that would ever be made.

But in addition to this subversion of principles we find that the expenditure of legislators' salaries is to be made at the instance and for the advantage of a body of men whose economic creed is the restriction of labour. Their place is won by advocacy of a doctrine that freedom in the application of industry is not to be allowed. According to their arguments, it is necessary to maintain in addition to the various officers of government, beginning with the ornamental sinecures, including the actual governing officials, clerical and military orders, civil servants, landowners who retain their land after its obligations have ceased, judges and police (will the tale of them ever be told); a still further set of officials to see that

labour is not sold under price. And when in addition to all this these men claim an alteration in the law that they may the better, and with less fear of retribution hinder the application of labour by peacefully persuading labourers whose rights to freedom they deny, it becomes a question whether a state of anarchy or no government would really be worse than the disorder and distress which this over-government produces; to say nothing of increasing the burden by devising new salaries for these extra over-rulers out of the public purse.

CHAPTER X.

First Principles.

CAN a man injure his fellows by producing useful and desirable subsistence for human beings? That is the pivot on which hangs at this moment the question of whether this vast nation having so far led the world in the best economic advancement is to resume its lead or is to refuse further progress and to crush back its people to poverty, degradation, distress, and degeneration. Is it or can it be wrong to work? Can I do mischief by the application of skill and industry to the material objects around me? If, but only if, production of the means of livelihood and comfort is or can be harmful to the people or a considerable section of them we are on the right course. Who will argue for it? Granted that it is beneficial for one to stop another from working we are pressing on and climbing up to a better millennium. Only, however,

if we grant that condition. But if a man cannot injure the people by working in that way we are for the time on a down track which leads away from any such economic consummation.

The results so far indicate no great distance traversed towards the millennium when we consider all the material possibilities which science and invention have put within our reach. But what is the cause of this? Is it that the motives of humanity have not exerted their full force: the hunger and other appetites have not urged to industry: the love of wife and family has not impelled to exertion: and religion in various forms has not filled its adherents with earnest striving after good? Is it that these motives have been feeble in their effect? Or is it that reason has not had the rudder and that consequently motive power has been wasted?

We are told a good deal about the way we are progressing, and there can be no mistaking the direction that our ship's head is turned. The ever increasing sphere of government is only too clearly apparent. The tendency to restrict free-

dom and at the same time the growth of enormous combinations (of which individuals are simply the counted units on which to calculate percentages) are obvious enough. But is it true progress or a wandering out of the right path? The answer depends on the question with which we started this chapter.

Can it be hurtful to me that my neighbour should work at the producing of useful commodities? Yes! says the trades unionist, if he sells them too cheap. Then the worst man is he who gives away anything that he has produced. He undersells everybody. The best man is he who produces nothing or destroys all he has produced; who refuses to sell at all, or burns corn ricks and destroys other subsistence, throwing ship loads of provender into the Thames, for instance. This is a statement for thinkers to ponder over, not for those to whom thinking is too painful a strain. The latter will talk about using reason in all things, meaning by that not too vigorous an effort of mind.

It is said that an Englishman hates an abstract proposition. Considering the sort of abstract proposition with which he has been favoured in recent years one cannot

be surprised at that. Society, the community, Labour with a capital L, with Capital and the like terms, all meaning persons, or ideas, or nothing at all, just as the context might require, not to mention labour units and other such meaningless expressions, would have put a passion of hatred into the meekest. But the real reason for the Englishman's hatred of such conceptions is that at heart he is a lover of his own freedom as well as of the solid substantial fact. He loves and lives (up to these days) the life that refuses to be run into a mould. That is what has kept him so far from submitting to the abstract conceptions with which so many would surround him.

It is this freedom and life which have hitherto saved the Englishman from the worst of erroneous abstract propositions rather than any skill in handling such doctrines. But he made short work of that cobweb called the divine right of kings. And he somehow learnt enough of abstract conceptions to enable him to overthrow the restrictions to which he had submitted on the trade with other countries. Only thus was he able to supply his increasing need for bread.

Still, he has had to take his schooling with the aid of the rod. For he kept himself in poverty until positive famine was threatened before he got hold of the substantial truth that there was something very twisted and "cobwebby" about a tariff to find him in work and money, by keeping him out of food.

Let us, therefore, reflect on this principle, that one man may hurt another by producing food to eat and raiment to wear, or even shelter and warmth. This conclusion of trade restriction and collective bargaining carries with it the conclusion that idleness and destruction are good while industry and free trade are bad. Let us hear nothing about what benefits trades unionism in reason will produce. If trades unionism means mutual helpfulness and no hindrance, no interference with liberty whatsoever, we have nothing to say against it to a reasonable or unreasonable extent. But that implies no attempt to control prices and no collective bargaining, to say nothing of coercing those outside the union. These are bad in principle, and cannot be made good by moderation in application. Moderation in what is bad is still bad.

Murder in moderation, stealing within reason, robbery within limits, have nothing to recommend them to us. And if a man cannot hurt another by working then it is bad from the beginning to hinder his working. For he is hurt by being thus hindered.

It is the abstract propositions that do not fit with the facts which are to be feared. And a principle is good or bad according as it is good or bad carried to the point at which it is qualified by another principle. The principle of liberty comes to a dead end when it impinges on another man's liberty. Beyond that it is an infringement and bad. If only a little beyond it is only a little bad. Those who like this expression will doubtless choose moderation in badness.

The principle of liberty to produce useful commodities comes to a dead end when the producer himself is satisfied he has enough and is tired. There is a point at which there is sense and reason. That point is free trade in labour. The principle of restriction says such liberty is injurious, it is deadly competition, and must be stopped at the point determined by the union. There must be peaceable

persuasion by those who are out on strike of any who may be disposed to work on the offered terms against their exercising such liberty. It is not right of these persuaded ones to work against the will of the community; the community in this case being a combination of men to stop producing in order to force the money price of their work to a higher standard, or keep it from falling to the level of the free market.

Can the man who wishes to work despite this peaceful persuasion injure the others by doing so? If not, the peaceful persuasion (which we have seen to be inevitably not without intimidation of some sort) is a distinct infringement of his rights, and that to no purpose. When a man representing a trades union can boast at a public meeting that with the consent of the management he has affixed a notice on the works that all who are in arrear with their payment to the union on a date fixed will be stopped from their wage earning, there is what Englishmen who knew the meaning of liberty would have thought an infringement of their rights. The Liberal party (so it is called) is supported in Parliament to-day by a

representative of that particular union, whose place in his absence such a man, with such a boast in his mouth, could take at a public meeting. This mode of collecting contributions is another aspect of the question to be considered in the following chapter. It is an alchemy for extracting the results of labour. But it is mentioned here as a case of destruction of liberty.

To the question which the trades unionist answers in the affirmative, the free trader answers "No! the principle is sound when applied to any body of persons that one cannot do injury to the others by producing human subsistence." If he produces it for nothing he cannot do so. How, then, can he do so if he produces it for half price? But, says one who may be a university professor of political economy discussing the subject at a meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science: "We have only to look round to see the advantage of trades unions"—a truly scientific way, perhaps, of gathering facts and drawing conclusions. "It must be injurious to undersell another." "We know trades unions are a good thing." Such argu-

ments were doubtless used against Galileo's absurd contention that the world was round and moved: which damnable heresy the poor man was peacefully persuaded to recant and solemnly abjure on his knees, though he got up again hard and unconverted at heart, saying, "The world moves nevertheless."

There was excuse for Galileo's tormentors. Their whole existence depended, as they thought, on the world's flatness. And it was certainly an outrageous and novel suggestion that it was otherwise. But there is nothing outrageous or novel in the suggestion that freedom to produce, freedom to sell, or freedom to buy, is beneficial; restrictions on such freedom being, therefore, injurious. It may be admitted that the present position of some depends on the adherence to restrictive doctrines. But if, for argument's sake, we must concede any novelty it relates only to labour. The outrageousness is in the suggestion that a man should be at liberty to direct his own efforts to useful production instead of idleness or amusement whenever he chooses. It is in the contention that a man should be free to sell his labour at his own price. He may

sell his goods at such a price as he can get. So much is admitted by all the people whose judgment is worth cultivating. There are some, it is true, who would stop that—who believe that bread should be made dear in order to avoid its being wasted. But one cannot answer every fool according to his folly.

If we can get sound economics into the minds of say four hundred members of the House of Commons we shall be able to avoid doing further mischief. This, of course, assumes that, if they knew, they will do according to their knowledge; though the assumption may be too large. Certainly, however, four hundred members of that House believe that if I have goods to sell which I have produced, or if I wish to buy goods for my consumption or re-sale, I ought not to be interfered with in the price at which I sell or buy them. But if instead of goods I have time on my hands and wish to sell my labour and services to get money with which to purchase goods that is quite another matter. In such a case I must not sell my labour at my own free will. I must ask a trade official if I may do so, if the conditions and the pay are right, and

pay into the fund out of which his salary is paid. Failing this I must be peacefully persuaded. Am I or am I not a fool?

Briefly expressed, the sole argument is "Great is Diana of the Ephesians," and for the time being she flourishes. Her priests wax fat and kick everybody. There is a craft flourishing on our ignorance as so many other crafts have done. And we recognise their position as the protectors of Labour, an expression which does not mean labourers, but an abstract idea, and that an error. We say Labour must be protected though we denounce protection as mischievous.

But let us see why it is that a man cannot injure another or any number of others by producing useful subsistence. What a fearful position we should have to face if he could. What a blessing that the fear is groundless. There are many ways of reaching the conclusion, but eventually they all lead to one answer. It may be expressed in different ways, and the subject has many phases, but the conclusion is one and the same whichever way we turn. If we take the question before us as a centre the answer to that question is the circumference of a circle

to be reached in every different direction. That circumference, the reason we seek to find and understand, is that the object and purpose of all production of subsistence is its consumption.

Let us change the colour of our proposition so as to make it more recognisable. The reason why it is impossible for one man to injure another by underselling him is that prices are fixed by demand and not by cost of production.*

Many will say it is absurd to ask why it is impossible for one to injure another by underselling him. We know, say they, that it is not impossible. In exactly the same way they know, to use the old illustration, that to break all the windows in a row of houses makes trade. With an increase of their knowledge they would know that such a proceeding injures trade. These people know or think they know that trade is improved by keeping out

* It must not be imagined that value depends on demand because Jevons said so and learned professors have fallen in with the view. The evil of accepting a doctrine with our eyes shut and our mouths open is such that one hardly ought to mention authorities for any theory. This doctrine happens to have been accepted. But it was true before it was accepted. Business men knew it before Jevons was born. It was against Free Traders and the Manchester School that Ruskin set up his quaint conceits contrary to this theory. But the business of the world must be carried on upon the assumption that an object is worth neither more nor less than it will fetch in the market. The buyers are those who are to use it. It was made for them. The price cannot by the laws of the universe be other than they will give.

the competition of the foreigner. But a sufficient number are already educated up to the point of knowing that shutting out such competition hinders trade. They need a little more education to enable them to realise that it does not help the trade of one labourer to keep the competition of another out of the market, and conversely that it does not damage the trade of the former to permit the latter to undersell him.

What does damage his trade is that his own prices should be above those at which there is sufficient demand. That is accomplished chiefly by the action of trade combinations to raise prices, preventing the money from flowing at market level, as in some countries by taxes at the seaboard or other frontier to keep out the competition of the foreigner; and as in all by bad land systems, excessive taxation improperly applied, and economic errors not at present under discussion.

We have not emphasised the fact that the attempt to undersell is itself a sign that there has been restriction. Underselling in one aspect is unnatural, and in another aspect is a natural way of getting over an unnatural condition. It can only

be possible as the consequence of unnatural interference. For when a person has anything to sell he naturally strives to get as much as he can for it. If he undersells another it is because he cannot sell over, or on a level with, that other. He sells at the best price at which he knows there is a demand for his services.

This leads us to another important fact, which might almost have answered our original query. It is the man who is out of work who pulls down prices, and not the man already producing. The man who is producing goods at half the price he ought to produce them (if one can speak of a price at which he ought to produce, adopting for the moment the ethics of restrictionists) does not injure the man who is getting the full price. Whatever reason we may assign for the latter getting double the price of the other, the question for him is whether there is demand for his production at his price. And if the other is fully occupied at his half price he has nothing with which to pull down the price of the more favoured competitor. What does pull down the price is the man who wishes to produce and has not the market. He it is who

offers his labour at a lower price, and since he is free to take the situation or custom of the higher priced one he is a real menace.

So that we arrive at the conclusion that it is not the man who produces subsistence who can be in any way a mischief, but the man who does not produce. His desiring to produce may be a menace to the man who is producing at a comparatively high price. But the moment he is producing and fully occupied he ceases to be a menace to anyone. Unless, indeed, we are really to believe with present day politicians and up-to-date writers that the man who does no work at all (always provided he will spend money and take care not to let it be thought that he desires to work) is really as useful to the community as if he actually laboured.

Apart from this doctrine that spending and consuming is more desirable than working and producing, it is obvious that the man out of work is the only dangerous person. Certain it is that he is the only one capable of reducing prices by competition. He makes no reduction so long as he sees plenty of demand at his present price.

Now, to realise this means realising that the action of combinations to hinder underselling is directed against the unemployed. Of course, those who direct their action in this way are loudest in their demands that the unemployed shall be provided for by the state. That only indicates a desire on their part that some one other than themselves shall save them from the consequences of their own action and from the means of its purpose being thwarted. But government cannot suspend the law of gravitation. Nor can it give the results of production without production. When it subsidises the work of any section to relieve any other section of its burden it only lays the burden on in another fashion, and the consequence will be the worse for all but the strongest. Rulers and government do not really pay the cost. The burden of the subsidy will fall on those who have to work.

These are a few thoughts out of hundreds of ways in which the same conclusions are reached. Probably they are wearisome enough already. But let the reader take notice that when he finds a bit of truth he can turn it upside down, inside out, from front to back, and from side

to side, any way, every way, and it is not annihilated. If the theory is spurious he will find he cannot work it far backwards and forwards before it cracks and breaks into fragments.

One of the commonest theories advanced to support restrictive appliances and government extravagance is that the standard of subsistence must be raised to create a demand. On the standard of subsistence we said before all that need be said. But the raising of prices by increased demand tempts some to advocate the increasing of demand artificially.

Yet see how soon the theory cracks. It matters nothing for our purpose whether the demand is to raise the standard of subsistence or the raised standard of subsistence is to increase the demand. That the standard of subsistence cannot be advantageously raised without the subsistence was what we noticed previously. What we are now observing is that the demand either as a cause or a consequence of a raised standard of subsistence cannot be artificially increased without suffering and loss. And if not, what good can be comprised in the doctrine that we suffer from under-consumption? It is admitted

that the great mass consume all they can get. But the idea is to give them more power to demand; we are still suffering from that dreadful phantom over-supply.

Take one or two instances of possible means of raising demand. A war is a case in point. One has known men wish for a "good war," in order to revive trade. There is no more effective means of raising demand. It does nothing to increase supply, though whether that statement should be connected with the preceding one by "and" or "but" depends on one's point of view. To the protectionists in goods or labour the fact that a war produces nothing beyond sound and smoke —except death and devastation—should be an argument in its favour; demand in plenty and no supply is their ideal.

But this does not raise the standard of subsistence. This does not feed men, women, and children. This cannot be regarded as a means of increasing comfort and happiness. The demand is increased, but it is unnatural, and the supply is decreased. And the certainty—not merely probability—is that there will be distress following, more especially if the war is

financed, as most wars in these days are financed, by borrowing on public credit.

This, however, it may be contended, was not what was suggested. These advocates did not mean the demand caused by a war, but the demand caused by the circulation of money spent on public works. The clinging hopes and child-like dependence based on public enterprise are pitiful to behold. "It will create a demand," say they, "and circulate money by doing useful work." To this end numberless schemes are suggested for wasting the resources of the nation in fanciful projects to create a demand and improve trade. One would have side-walks made along great reaches of country highways, begging the land if possible, but otherwise buying out of public funds. Another would plant trees which would create valuable forests in a few decades, though undergrowth might be sold in a few years. Many advocate the reclamation of waste land and foreshores at times of distress when good farm land is going out of cultivation. The laying out of new streets, public parks, and the like, and the erection of palatial buildings for public purposes is quite a usual method of seeking

to improve trade. Said one with anger and withering scorn to an innocent person who deplored the cost of the taking up and relaying of streets with which public authorities seem sometimes to amuse themselves, "Doesn't it make trade?"

Exactly in the same way as a war all these schemes create demand. Do they raise the standard of subsistence? By demand is, of course, meant demand with money in its hand. But whose is the money? Is the money that is used in this way taken from productive uses of which the need is proved by the profit they bring? Will the schemes prevent the money being used in some way more likely to benefit even those who get it for their services in these public works? What does it effect towards affording the supply for this demand?

These are highly important questions. The answer to them clearly indicates that it is not in the creation of a demand that hope of salvation is to be found; it is not the demand towards which we should direct our efforts. A demand without supply is of the nature of a famine. And when a theorist sets up the doctrine that the raising of prices by combination

will raise the standard of subsistence and thus or otherwise increase the demand, he is condemning at once the objects of the combination. If his combination were one to increase supply it would be an entirely different matter. But that is just what it is directed against. The men employed are to be kept out of the labour market where they might be a difficulty in the way of keeping up the prices. Their competition to produce must be restricted at all cost.

The notion of raising prices to create a demand is, as every economist knows, contrary to sound doctrine. But it is not every economist who can apply his knowledge to the conditions around him. The raising of prices may increase the supply, but the supply increased will be of just that sort of commodity or labour of which we have raised the prices. And increasing that supply was exactly what we wished to avoid by our combination. As to demand, the raising of prices will decrease it. But the demand thus decreased will be of exactly that kind of goods or services which we have to sell.

Again, the meddlesome one comes in to argue that, if what we have said is true,

the government ought to grant subsidies on supplies or to organise labour in producing subsistence. Really, one cannot wonder at the impatience of the remark, "Why cannot you let it alone?" The meddlesome one does not understand that supplies are only wanted to meet demand. He does not realise that to create a demand artificially is to consume supplies without corresponding production. His sidewalks and public parks, new streets and buildings, do nothing to produce subsistence. To spend money on them cannot by any conceivable possibility help on the whole to fill the mouths of hungry children. But this equally foolish idea of subsidies to encourage supply is only the same error in another form, the same mistake turned round to show the other side. The relief works are subsidised industries. Subsidised industries in general are operations not quite worth carrying on, and a means of wasting national resources. They are a mode of securing the doing of the wrong thing.

The question will doubtless still be asked how we can secure the doing of the right thing. The error that "something must be done" is so deeply rooted that

one can imagine the distress of the latter day meddler who has seen something of the force of the preceding arguments. He has not realised the full force of them, and is still under the impression that he can do something with his government to improve conditions by acting on supply and demand, but he is bewildered in the evil he sees from improper handling of the question. There he stands wringing his hands, "What can we do?" Gentle reader, you can leave the motives of mankind to do their own work. And the highest ambition of your life should be to keep your fingers from interferences, and to knock down every man you see interfering or trying to do so. Take care that no one meddles with the freedom of producers of subsistence to do the work they select at the price they can get. It is not a high ambition, but the most useful for the times. You would like a constructive policy, no doubt, as being more worthy of your sympathetic heart and brilliant parts. But destructive criticism will afford room for growth which is better than construction, as a living forest is superior to a wilderness of scaffold poles.

Neither supply nor demand can be interfered with without mischief by any government or combination. And any interference with prices is to interfere with both supply and demand. The freedom to work one regards as a right, and the peaceful persuasion of a combination of obstructive competitors as an interference with that right. I cannot do harm by working at honest industry whatever my price. But I shall get the best price I can find for my own sake. What will determine the price offered to my competitor is the demand that exists for his labour, not the price I get for mine. He may have to take less or get more according to the demand. That demand traced to its source is coincident with the supply that exists of other sorts of labour. And my working at such price as I can get is a supply of the sort of labour of myself and of my competitor: at the same time operating as a demand for the labour of our customers—that demand calling forth the supply which I and my competitor need. Even for my competitor's sake I had better work than not do so, though he may regard the price as too low and refuse it.

The fact that demand is the ultimate determinant of price is what proves the truth of the assertion that the exertion of labour even if under-sold is not and cannot be injurious. We cannot be surprised to find that effort to bring forth the utilities of natural objects is not harmful. We should have been amazed if we had found any such conclusion and should have been sure we had got our subject twisted out of line at some point.

What is the meaning, then, of all the social policy by which it is imagined we are progressing by safeguards against too much work, too much competition, too much production? Partly it is the growth and increase of extractive contrivances whereby the worker is made to yield his substance to his betters; the alchemies and priesthoods which we must notice in succeeding chapters. Partly it is the doctrine we have just been noticing that demand should be fostered by artificial contrivances; with some assistance from the frothy notion that we require not so much increased production but a wise and equitable distribution, be the signification of this doctrine what it may. Such social policy is wholly an error.

The "wise and equitable distribution" is a piece of that meaningless nonsense which all the books in the world could never answer because it could not be explained. In actual life the distribution takes place through the demand we have been discussing. This demand is the power and disposition to purchase with an acceptable medium of exchange the commodities or services which a person may need or desire. The term under-consumption as opposed to that of over-production implies that it is desirable to increase the power to purchase. Hence the contrivances for increasing money wages, giving alms and pensions, and increasing public expenditure generally. The doctrine of over-production said in effect reduce the quantity of goods and commodities. The doctrine of under-consumption says, find means of consuming more; which is much the same thing in another form. Neither doctrine says increase the production or find the conditions favourable to its increase.

Why money should so long have filled the minds even of philosophers to the exclusion of what money can buy we need hardly discuss. But that is undoubtedly

the cause of the errors before us. That money brings power is suggested by the use of the term purchasing power. But an economist ought to see from that very fact that the increase of production is the solution of the problem of under-consumption. The effective power to purchase comes no otherwise than from having supplied some element or rendered some service in production. To distribute by any other means the power to purchase is merely to impoverish the nation. The labour and goods sold are themselves the substance of the purchasing power represented by the money with which other commodities can be purchased.

The great error consists in supposing that money and prices are rigid consumable substances. Price is only a measurement, and if the price of a quantity of labour or goods is changed there must be corresponding changes in related labour or goods. Exchange cannot otherwise continue. And without the exchange there cannot be the money at all. There can be no power to purchase if there is no power to sell. When, moreover, the money is available, its validity is entirely dependent

on its measurement relative to the goods desired.

The pretence, for surely it can be little more, that employers will themselves be content with a smaller proportion of profit because they are harried by professional bargainers, ignores the continuing nature of economic activity. The employers may yield to-day because they realise their difficulties and responsibilities, and cannot afford to have their business stopped. But they must inevitably accommodate their conduct to the conditions or cease their business. Those who cease their business make it so much the easier for those who are left to meet the change of circumstances. The ultimate sufferers in this, as in all cases of checked production or hindered exchange, must inevitably be the human creatures for whose use the commodities are required. And they, we discover, are only the same people whose under-consumption was observed; but they are now seen in another capacity. On these lines there is nothing left for them but to clamour for more purchasing power and follow the vicious circle again.

In the political economy of half a century

ago there was a doctrine, not very clear but with some glimmering of light, which is apposite to the point before us. It stated that a demand for commodities is not a demand for labour. We do not propose to follow the doctrine in detail. As originally set out it is only interesting as a puzzle garden is interesting. What it really meant was that a demand for commodities is not a supply of commodities. It would have been a little clearer than it was if it had said that a demand for commodities is not a supply of real wages, instead of saying it is not a demand for labour.

What the economists said, briefly expressed, was that a man does not supply food to labourers by wearing costly velvet. That seems true. But John Stuart Mill apparently thought it was a demand for labour if a man hired bricklayers. What he does not seem to have realised was that if the bricklaying was useless to mankind the giving of purchasing power for it did not in fact supply the real wages. The real wages must be something the bricklayers and their families could consume. The money was only a command of those real wages. The more important

question related to the actual production of the consumable commodities. Professor Fawcett distinguished three cases. The consumption of velvet and other luxuries, he agreed, did not supply food to labourers. The payment of labourers by manufacturers to produce useful and saleable objects just as certainly, he saw, did really supply something for the money. But if a landowner hired labourers to make an ornamental lake, the uselessness of the product was disregarded. The landowner had credit for supplying wages because he gave the men money by which they could obtain the real wages; though the real wages were consumable commodities which had been produced by others, and this meant a diminution of them by the expense of the unproductive fish pond.

That argument was useful for its times as far as it went. It did not go far enough even for those times. But it was intended as an answer to the contentions of those who set up the doctrine that if rents had to be reduced there would be less demand for labour. The effort was made to show that my lady at the hall, wearing costly silks and satins, did not in fact feed the labourers' children either on the estate or

in the manufacturing town. We quite agree. But by the same reasoning, or other considerations which we would fain set out more fully and clearly, we may answer more modern contentions.

Let us assume that higher prices of labour will produce more money, which, in fact, is only true when wages rise naturally and are not artificially forced. Even then the additional money, as also the money paid out for public works, whether useful or frivolous, and all pensions, gratuities, and similar expenses of government, can only create an increased demand for commodities. It does not supply an increased amount of goods and conveniences constituting the real wages of the mass of the working population.

But this is not all. The relation of the demand for commodities to the supply of wages seems to have lost its interest, even as puzzle garden. It is buried in literature now become ancient and a dead letter. Nor did it at any time sufficiently probe into the question why some should have so great a command of commodities for so small a supply on their part of real wages to labourers.

There is living interest in this question

because at this time it seems to be strongly held by certain financial authorities that motor cars are diminishing trade and producing dear money: presumably also deepening poverty of the masses. Now we may without hesitation put motor cars in the same category as costly silks and velvets as luxuries of the rich, not aiding production of necessaries for the poor. But that does not help us in the least towards the solution of the problem of poverty, or give any countenance to the idea that they are responsible for bad trade or dear money. They are to the individuals who enjoy them exactly what widened streets, costly town halls, parks, and other public works are to the community—a luxury. In neither case is food or other sustenance a result of them.

The great difference between motor cars and the public luxuries on which public money is spent is that the owners of motor cars presumably do not have to starve themselves in order to buy or maintain their luxuries, while many of the public would be infinitely more happy if their rulers would refrain from giving them the luxury of palatial public buildings and magnificent thoroughfares or

parks at the expense of the means of obtaining food and shelter. And further, the question must be asked whether this poverty of the individual poor, for want of that out of which the public luxuries are obtained, is not the very means whereby the wealthy individual is enabled to enjoy so much of luxury.

It is a question worthy of notice whether luxury is the cause of poverty or poverty the cause of excessive luxury. Public luxury may readily cause private poverty. The authority of government may be misused, ignorantly or indifferently, with that result. With understanding a democracy may remedy this. Private luxury on the part of the rich is beyond control. For sumptuary laws are ineffective to translate the forbidden luxury into necessaries for the poor. We must endeavour to ascertain what is really cause and what is only effect. There may even be a common cause, or common causes, without any relation of cause and effect, existing between the private luxury and the poverty.

PART IV.

SOCIAL EVILS VIEWED AS EXTRACTIONS.

CHAPTER XI.

'Alchemies.'

It is my deliberate opinion that if, standing on the threshold of being, one were given the choice of entering life as a Tierra del Fuegan, a black fellow of Australia, an Esquimaux in the Arctic circle, or among the lowest classes in such a highly civilised country as Great Britain, he would make infinitely the better choice in selecting the lot of the savage.

HENRY GEORGE.

When we compare the individuals of the same variety or sub-variety of our older cultivated plants and animals, one of the first points which strikes us is that they generally differ more from each other than do the individuals of any one species or variety in a state of nature. And if we reflect on the vast diversity of the plants and animals which have been cultivated, and which have varied during all ages under the most different climates and treatment, we are driven to conclude that this great variability is due to our domestic productions having

been raised under conditions of life not so uniform as, and somewhat different from, those to which the parent species had been exposed under Nature.

CHARLES DARWIN.

Consider it, look at it! The widow is gathering nettles for her children's dinner: a perfumed Seigneur delicately lounging in the Œil-de-Boeuf, has an alchemy whereby he will extract from her the third nettle, and name it Rent and Law; such an arrangement must end. Ought it not?

THOMAS CARLYLE.

Ponder it carefully, consider all these passages severally and in conjunction. Observe the relation of cause and effect: of fact and explanation. Henry George was not a fierce snarling pessimist like Karl Marx. He was a scientific economist whose position will be in the front rank, not behind the foremost. A brilliant optimism glows from his pages. But he could not disguise the facts. Carlyle, with his penetrating flashlights reversing the verdicts of nations and centuries, gives us a picture from past history which aids the economist's view of the present. Darwin, the naturalist, gives us an explanation which should repress the pride of the arrogant, but stir up the energy of the indifferent if there is any kindness in their hearts.

That there should be variability among the multitude of individuals who constitute our species is inevitable and desirable. A machine made equality is a foolish notion not even to be argued with. That individuals will differ from each other more under a condition of civilisation than in a state of nature may not be an unmixed curse. The uniform conditions of savagery cannot possibly produce the happiest and most efficient specialisation of body and mind. This is only possible with division of labour and freedom from some of the dangers and necessities which are inseparable from humanity in its simplest states. But that it should be possible for a sane and capable man to write with cool deliberation such an indictment of our civilisation as is contained in the sentence from Henry George may well give us pause. And who shall say it is not well founded ?

Yet if it is well founded there can be no defence of such a result as this from our civilisation. Repentance and amendment are the only course open to us—or death and damnation. Variability which brings members of a civilised community into a condition which all things

considered is below that of savages, cannot be the result of natural evolution and upward progress, the onward march of the race. It is not even reversion. It is a perversion, a degeneration, malformation; in a word, failure writ large. It only needs time and further movement in the same direction for Nature herself to blast the miserable deformed growth as a wastrel.

The growth of which we speak here is the civilisation which can produce this state of affairs. Civilisation of that sort must end. Rightly so, as says Carlyle. As he also says, "For long years and generations it lasted: but the time came. Feather-brain whom no reasoning and no pleading could touch, the glare of the firebrand had to illuminate; there remained but that method." But the description of the state of revolutionary France from which we take our extract is wondrously reminiscent of a description (also given by Carlyle) of the state of affairs in Corn Law ridden England. Of France he writes:—

> Where will this end? In the Abyss, one may prophesy; whither all Delusions are, at all moments, travelling; where this Delusion has now arrived. For if there be a Faith from of old it is this, as we

often repeat, that no lie can live for ever. The very truth has to change its vesture from time to time; and be born again. But all lies have sentence of death written down against them, in Heaven's Chancery itself; and, slowly or fast, advance incessantly towards their hour. 'The sign of a Grand Seigneur being Landlord,' says the vehement plain spoken Arthur Young, 'are wastes, *landes*, deserts, ling; go to his residence, you will find it in the middle of a forest, peopled with deer, wild boars, and wolves. The fields are scenes of pitiable management, as the houses are of misery. To see so many millions of hands, that would be industrious, all idle and starving. Oh, if I were legislator of France for one day, I would make these great lords skip again!' Oh, Arthur, thou now actually beholdest them *skip*; wilt thou grow to grumble at that too?

Thus and much more to the same effect in the history of the Revolution in France —incidentally and of set purpose. But see the state of England half a century later:—

"Passing by the workhouse of St. Ives, in Huntingdonshire, on a bright day last autumn,' says the picturesque tourist, 'I saw sitting on wooden benches in front of their Bastille, and within their ring-wall and its railings, some half hundred or more of these men. Tall, robust figures, young mostly, or of middle age: of honest countenance, many of them thoughtful and even intelligent looking men. They sat there, near by one another, but in a kind of torpor, especially in a silence which was very striking. In silence: for, alas! what word

was to be said? An earth all lying round, crying, Come and till me, come and reap me: yet here we sit enchanted! In the eyes and brows of these men hung the gloomiest expression, not of anger, but of grief and shame and manifold inarticulate distress and weariness; they returned my glance with a glance that seemed to say, 'Do not look at us, we sit enchanted here we know not why. The sun shines and the earth calls; and by the governing Powers and Impotences of this England we are forbidden to obey. It is impossible, they tell us!' There was something that reminded me of Dante's Hell in the look of all this; and I rode swiftly away."

Strange amid all our gyrations how little we seem really to move. I remember years ago having a brief interview with a newspaper proprietor whose politics were nominally Liberal and Progressive, and whose tastes were antiquarian. Said he characteristically, "We are not going to give space for your theories, we are too far along for such rubbish as that." He was supported by modern doctrines. Yet the pen of Arthur Young, if he had come into this fair realm of England more than a century after his time, would have been able to find a great deal to support a very similar description to that which he gave of France at the time he wrote. The stranger journeying by St. Ives might

in this 20th century have found much to remind him of the condition of affairs which he had to describe in his day, though it had been thought gone for ever. For what rubbish can we ever say we are too far along? "No lie can live for ever." But how slowly and painfully, though mayhap incessantly, do lies in many cases "advance towards their hour." Nay, more than that, it seems that even lies must grow, like boils and ulcers, until they are ripe for bursting. There is agony, it may be, to be endured, but we usually suffer to the end and only occasionally is the pain such as to drive us to the lance.

It is unpleasant to contemplate, but it seems likely that the economic lie known as Labour with a capital L is still growing and that we have not felt the worst of it yet. But it is safe to say that if its growth continues at the present rate it will burst within measurable time and thus draw towards its hour. With it will go some other errors. The other errors may indeed go first and thus enable us the longer to tolerate the one we have left. For each lie destroyed reduces the suffering, unless another is rendered more

malignant by the greater space allowed to it, as often does happen.

Now we come upon these considerations by way of the question we propounded to ourselves at the conclusion of the preceding chapter concerning poverty and luxury. We may confess ourselves somewhat weary of the talk about a social policy and of the policy without principle which finds actual adoption. For on what principle of government can this social policy be defended? It is pragmatic, but only to an extent of which the limits are not in the least defined. It makes some claim to be a policy of freedom or liberalism. But absolutely never can one find any comparison of a particular proposal with the principles of human freedom. It is not a conservative policy professedly. It finds bounds which it deems not safe to be passed. But no one could say beforehand by reference to any principle where those bounds would be reached. It is necessary to wait and see how far the advocates of the policy of restriction and meddling can push the opponents of the interference. It is not a radical policy for no attempt is made to go to the root of any evil or abuse. And as a policy of pragmatism it

fails for want of sufficient examination into the effects of its measures on those at whose instance or for whose benefit ostensibly the measures are enacted.

That politics should be studied regardless of private well being is a condition of affairs to which the world has grown accustomed through centuries of statecraft. Balance of power, traditional policy, and the like questions have long occupied the minds of rulers, always having in view the possibility and importance of keeping their seats. But when these questions are relegated to a position secondary to what are called social questions it is time for rulers to begin studying economics as well as questions of political diplomacy. It is here that we alight on the subject of luxury and poverty. And it is here also that we have to face the question of human progress or decay and the rise or downfall of nations.

What we have seen in previous chapters is that nothing, absolutely nothing, that can be called desirable is to be expected from restricting, checking or hindering the production of useful subsistence. We have turned the question to every light and seen it in every aspect.

We made the inquiry of justice and equity so far as we might. In deference to present day phraseology we may speak of it as equality of opportunity. But we found nothing to justify the taxation of industry, enterprise, occupation of land, and production of subsistence. Such equality before the law as we could imagine imperatively demanded that taxation should be imposed in exactly the way which (quite independently of the justice and morality of it) was likely to result in the most abundant production.

We looked at the subject from the point of view of the evolution of the race. Not a trace could we find of any need to interfere to diminish the produce available for the subsistence of mankind. Everything we saw argued for the utmost freedom to produce the material commodities essential to life or desirable for comfort. The highest standard of subsistence, the survival and reproductiveness of the best of the race, were likely to be reached by avoiding the imposition of burdens and hindrances, and securing freedom to move in the direction of the motive power which Nature gives to her true and healthy children.

We observed as we passed the balance of pleasure and pain, the "greatest happiness of the greatest number," as it has been insufficiently expressed, the utmost joy that is possible to all the individuals concerned. The result of our scrutiny gave no indication of any additional happiness coming from burdens and impositions, bonds, and hindrances. There was indication enough of pain and distress as the result of such restrictions.

Liberty for its own sake we deemed desirable. But we did not fail to notice that liberty increases life and gives power, as well as the co-related fact that life in strength and vigour insists on liberty. We saw this up to the very highest point of man's nature. And we also realised that the motives impelling to the most sublime thoughts and deeds are exactly those conceptions which are destroyed by any attempt to force them. Yet these are the motives on which those who attempt compulsion most rely for their desired effects.

We trace our way backwards in the other direction from freedom as our starting point. The contrivances for forcing the labour of inferior races can have no

approval from us, though we did not stay to study the evil effects. We might have found such effects on conquered and conquerors alike. But restricting, or holding back, labour of set purpose for the supposed good of the labourer, was only a means of reducing the subsistence possible to be enjoyed by him. He might have reached that result without compulsion or restriction if he had desired it. He had, however, desired more, and with that end in view had given up his liberty —only to get less.

We look at the question closely and narrowly. Can it be an evil to others for one to produce a surplus of subsistence? A government could easily do mischief in that way. It might take the resources of its subjects and use them in a way of its own not by the choice but contrary to the wishes of the subjects. There might be long continued expenditure in that for which there was no use. But it is quite otherwise with the individual. He may over-produce to his own disadvantage in the market, the reduction of his prices and profits, but that is a process he will stop as soon as he discovers it. Meantime, his customers get

the benefit. And more important to our discussion, his competitors do not suffer even by his under-selling, provided they have enough demand at their own prices. With regard to commodities, this is illustrated every day in actual experience. It is not otherwise with regard to labour, as is also proved by experience. If it were otherwise there could not exist the variations in price of similar labour which are known to exist. But by restrictive contrivances or combinations some are deterred from sale of their labour at the existing market price. Their consuming without producing is a loss to the whole community. Their desiring to produce, though they hold out for a minimum price, tends to keep the price of their competitors down to that minimum, when it might go up if their labour were once off the market. It would rise all the more probably as the result of surplus subsistence because (1) surplus subsistence is the owner's power to purchase services, and (2) the labourer sells more or less keenly in proportion as he is ill or well supplied with comfort.

But the old dread of over-production has taken a new form. Instead of pur-

posely hindering supply the present policy is artificially to stimulate demand. This is done by putting more money into the hands of consumers through means other than the production of commodities. This is the declared policy of one section of social reformers. Meantime, another section continues to declare the doctrine in the older aspect. "Unrestricted competition" say they "leads to unequal distribution, the accumulation of the means of production in the hands of a few, who take the surplus value and consume it in their own luxury, while the many who create this surplus value are crushed down to the direst poverty."

Again the question is before us, Does the luxury cause the poverty or does the poverty cause the luxury? And a further question is now with us, Does the unrestricted competition directly or indirectly cause poverty and luxury? Let us put yet another question. Does the restriction of the competition cause the poverty and luxury both? Competition is the effort to produce and sell objects for which human beings have use or desire: the strife to secure and retain a place in which to work at supplying human needs.

That such effort and strife should result in luxury seems not impossible. That it should result in poverty is a flat contradiction of its inevitable effect, a palpable absurdity. That restriction and hindrance of the effort and strife to produce should result in poverty is exactly what we should expect. But that it should at the same time result in luxury implies (1) that the restriction is only partial, not absolute, and (2) that it is accompanied by conditions which enable some to command either an excess of the sources of production beyond what they use or some portion of the shares of others in the result: possibly a combination of the two iniquities. That this is what we find must already be apparent. But we may emphasise it still further.

Henry George, looking at this progress of poverty side by side with luxury, attributed it entirely to the untaxed monopoly of land. But the view was too narrow. It showed the effect upon his mind of Adam Smith's omission to state and emphasise the cause of the demand. It gave indication that even Henry George did not get wholly free from the great danger in this science of giving too much

importance to the medium of exchange. Said he in effect "all the aids to competition by which subsistence is made more abundant and its production made more easy merely increase the rent." The inventions, the improved organisation, the discovery and cultivation of new lands and virgin soil, the cheapening of transit would all increase the rent at home. For Henry George was not a blind restrictionist, believing that the importations from abroad were dumped down in this country as rubbish to the detriment of those who were anxious to sweat and toil in the production of such objects. No man realised more clearly that these importations had to be paid for, and that they were paid for more easily by means of the exports than the identical goods imported could have been produced.

But it follows from what was said in our second chapter that these means of facilitating production do not increase the share that must be devoted to payment of rent. The landowner will share in the increased abundance. That we will admit, and it ought to close his mouth on the cry for shutting out the foreigner. The producers will, however, take the larger

share of the increase. Throughout the economic literature which has followed Adam Smith it is interesting to trace to how large an extent the motive and purpose of production has been ignored in the arguments. At some periods, and among some sections of writers, the sight of it has been almost or entirely lost. The slips of Adam Smith's pen have been elevated to magnificent, high sounding theories; for the advancement of mankind, and the redemption of the race from industrial despotism; without a fragment of truth in them. And Henry George so far allowed himself to be influenced by this error as to over-state his own case. But the increase of the production is bound to find customers before it can increase the rent. When it does so, the comfort and material well being of the human race is being improved, which is the purpose the economist has, or should have, in view. The facility of the production must of necessity be attractive to producers or they would not adopt it. They thus get more ease and leisure. That is not increasing the rent. We must bear the motive and purpose of the indus-

trial operations ever in view if we would reach sound conclusions.

The actual produce enjoyable as rent may increase from the means which increase the pleasures of others than landowners. But the proportionate share of rent can only increase by the depression of the margin of cultivation. That, as we saw, need not fall as a necessary condition of greater plenty. The utmost freedom to make use of all the resources of the earth, and of mankind, will add ever increasing abundance without of necessity taking in worse land for cultivation. And if in the progress of the race worse land is taken for use the result must be the possibility of feeding, and supplying comfort to, larger populations.

But the conception of an alchemy whereby the perfumed Seigneur takes from the widow the third nettle naming it Rent and Law is more than a picturesque statement by the historian and philosopher of the doctrine on which the economist dwells so largely. It is significant of much else concerning which the same illustration may be used. The simile may be applied to other modes of extracting the third or other nettle, naming it, for

instance, religion, humanism, or social reform.

Of one thing we may be certain in all these considerations. The contrivance which separates the labourer from the land: the man from the earth on which he dwells, will tend to poverty. It may or may not tend also to luxury. That depends on the exact mode of his separation. If it is an absolute restriction there can be no luxury. If it is a separation only sufficient to take, from between him and the object of his labour, a rent or other extraction for the benefit of another, and then to let him have the land subject to that deduction the extraction will probably bring luxury to the other.

The poverty comes, however, from the divorcement of the worker from his work. It cannot come from the closer contact between them: the increased operations, the more abundant supply of subsistence, the readier access to the market, either for goods or for labour. It is that which stands between which alone can do the mischief, not that which connects them. The middleman who finds a market renders service. The middleman who interferes with the market and creates price diffi-

culties does mischief. Whatever brings the worker to his work depends for its very continuance in a free market on its bringing subsistence to him as a consumer.

"The sign of a grand Seigneur being landlord is waste; desert: ling. To see so many millions of hands that would be industrious all idle and starving. Oh, if I were legislator of France for one day I would make these great lords skip again." Very desirable. "Oh, Arthur!" But we find on looking into the subject in this 20th century that there are other sorts of people whom it were desirable to make skip for their share in keeping millions of hands that would be industrious all idle and starving.

The traveller who saw Dante's Hell in the workhouse of St. Ives seemed to gather from the glance of its inmates, "Do not look at us, we sit enchanted here we know not why. The sun shines and the earth calls: and by the governing Powers and Impotences of this England we are forbidden to obey." Such language is strangely suggestive. By how many things is the worker for whom the sun shines and the earth calls forbidden to obey. Would that humanity would pause

for one half hour on this thought; to consider what are the barriers by which man is thus hindered and who they are who forbid him to obey what he feels to be the command an obedience to which will bring him reward. If we can make a catalogue of the governing Powers and Impotences of this England we may find some indication of who or what it is that forbids us to obey. But let us look at the whole subject, taking a comprehensive view with an open mind and a wide glance, not search out exclusively, like Karl Marx, all the bits of devilment by which the governing powers have shown their littleness of mind as well as their selfishness of heart. That could only lead us astray, as he led himself still further astray after first getting on a by-path created by the mistakes of orthodox economists.

Truly we cannot enough admire, in those Abbot Samson and William Conqueror times, the arrangement they had made of their governing classes. Highly interesting to observe how the sincere insight, on their part, into what did, of primary necessity, behove to be accomplished, had led them to the way of accomplishing it, and in the course of time to get it accomplished. No imaginery Aristocracy would serve their turn, and accordingly they attained

a real one. The Bravest men, who, it is ever to be repeated and remembered, are also on the whole the wisest, strongest, everyway best, had here, with a respectable degree of accuracy, been got selected; seated each on his piece of territory, which was lent him, then gradually given him, that he might govern it. These vice-kings, each on his portion of the common soil of England, with a Head King over all, were a virtuality perfected into an actuality really to an astonishing extent.

We may accept this verdict without damage to our argument. There was nothing here to keep the people from the land. There was a danger, as it afterwards turned out, of keeping them rather too closely to the land. Speaking generally, the arrangement worked well. The task of governing is a very necessary task, and although socialists seem to us much over-fond of government we do not deny the importance of some government. These feudal lords gave government, and they also afforded defence, in exchange for the land they enjoyed in that qualified fashion. The labourers tilled for them and they, as need be, fought for the labourers. There were some merry times under that arrangement though not unmixed with the evils to which flesh is heir.

But in the course of centuries the

governing came to be done in a very different fashion. Not in these days is this the mode by which we are ruled. We have soldiers, judges, officials, and innumerable sorts of defenders and governors (the prospect of cataloguing them brings dismay to us) all added together to take the place of the lords to whom the land was thus given. But these latter have forgotten to return the land when they gave up its duties and obligations. They have kept the land and left the duties and obligations to others. In very recent times they have by their power as rulers taken more land of that which had been previously common to all. And we seem content to have it so. We do not even ask them to pay taxes on their ownership of the land for the maintenance of government; as we reasonably might ask. The taxes are paid by occupiers of land, and by those who consume commodities or (with that end in view) earn money with which to buy what they require.

The eventual result of this disposition of the land and its duties is one of the alchemies by which the subsistence is extracted from those who produce it.

There is no implication in this statement that payment for the duty of governing (the need for which has been admitted) is not meet and right. We will observe how costly the governing has become under present conditions. But we must distinctly repudiate any suggestion that ruling is possible without reward; and cordially agree that government accomplished wisely and in due measure is worthy of its hire.

This duty of governing is indeed an important part of the world's work. And so far as it helps forward that work it shall receive no blame in these pages. But there are methods and conditions under which it may become over costly; may, indeed, become a hindrance instead of a help. It is this state of affairs to which we must attribute the poverty which we find ever increasing by the side of the luxury which science and industry, discovery and exchange, invention and organisation, make possible to us. We must distinguish between the governing and directing which aids the production of wealth for humanity and that which only extracts the results without rendering any service. And of some sorts of work or

professed work we must take great care not to have too much in proportion to other sorts. Supervision is good within due limits, but of mere supervision without scheming, origination, and application or exploiting, the due limits are soon reached.

Let us, however, proceed with our catalogue of the alchemies by which the produce of labour is extracted: not forgetting that no class of people could be maintained in power or even sustenance without at least some plausible argument for its existence: though each class might continue long after it had become a solecism. We see how a king and his peers have got the land, but how, as a class, they have kept it is another question altogether. It is perhaps desirable to draw a veil over the subject. The delicately lounging, perfumed Seigneur has presumably obtained his land by inheritance. But we will not inquire too closely into his pedigree. If we could attribute to him a purity of ancestry and descent far transcending what he actually possesses, the alchemy whereby he extracts the results of the knowledge and industry of others could find no favour with us. That in exchange for permission to walk the

earth in whatsoever part of it he does not particularly wish to walk himself, and for no other service, the struggling poor should give him part of their meagre fare to maintain him in idleness and in a luxury inconceivable to them, would require something more than a pedigree to obtain our approval.

The worst thing he does is to hold the land unused and waste. His duties have, however, been handed over not to one class but to several; who constitute several alchemies with the same result. A military class is the nearest to that from which his class originally sprung. Standing armies and standing navies are maintained by all civilised nations at enormous annual cost. Surely there need be little argument concerning this as an alchemy whereby poverty is increased with progress and luxury.

The alchemy named "Rent and Law" is supplemented by another named taxes. "The traveller walking up hill, bridle in hand, overtakes a poor woman," who speaks of "King's taxes, statute labour, Church taxes, taxes enough: the dues and taxes crush us down." Sad it is that religion should be used as an alchemy for

extracting maintenance and wealth without service, but so it is. Learned and distinguished prelates, or not so learned, not so distinguished, as the case may be, a class in all countries and representing various religions, contrives to live on the sustenance produced by others. There are good men who rise to the standard of service which their position demands and some who even transcend by far the requirements of duty, who honour the garb which distinguishes them. But the separation of a class of men for the rites of religion is a temptation to idle indifference, to which many of them succumb, thus rendering no service worthy of their hire. And the burden of the taxes thus expended is none the less.

The governing which originally fell among the duties incident to ownership of land included the administration of justice: the maintenance of the law That is passed over to a new class, a class skilled in the law. And by the alchemy of taxation or the conditions of the administration of law (which are not designed to make justice cheap) a large class subsists on this department of life without adding to the subsistence available.

In the course of time and the progress of civilisation government takes upon itself numerous and ever increasing duties which it is pleased to regard as essential to be performed by the ruling authorities. To what extent the subjects are inspected in all their doings no attempt shall be made to define. To all appearance any statement of the kind would quickly become obsolete. The clamour for more inspection is constantly increasing. There is poverty, distress, and starvation. The remedy usually suggested is the appointment of a few more salaried inspectors. They will produce nothing. They will find no market for productions, supply no tools or aids to production, give no guidance, invent no plan or scheme for facilitating production. Nothing of that kind is desired. These inspectors are only to see that those who control the production and those who render assistance in it behave according to the regulations. All this may be necessary or desirable. But it does not help the solution of the problem of poverty. These inspectors consume without producing. What they require others must supply. They only supervise and criticise. If they were given,

as some would have given to them, the power to stop the work of those whose wages were below a defined minimum, they might stop the wages altogether But they would not and could not supply better wages. To forbid work under a minimum price does not secure the offer of the minimum price.

The government service of which these inspectors form part covers (by way of inspection) a wide sphere of activity. Distinct from military or fighting service, and from police service, it is known as civil service. It has to do, among other things, with the collection of the revenue. It is a commonly accepted maxim of taxation that every tax should take as little as possible out of the pockets of the people beyond what it puts into the public treasury. Most countries seem to have designed their taxes in direct defiance of this maxim of economy. But we cannot dwell on every item in our catalogue of alchemies producing poverty.

Of taxes calculated to interfere with trade and exchange: duties on importation of goods; to raise rents and protect against the competition of the foreigner those who wish to make extortionate

profits from their enterprise, we will say nothing at all. Already the list of alchemies is become a weariness to the soul. Who could first have named this subject of poverty a problem? Is it a problem how I am become poor and remain so with all these alchemies taking my substance and all these restrictions forbidding my obedience to the call which the earth makes to cultivate and gather its fruits?

But weary or not we must go on. Most of these alchemies indicate the direct design of a class to enjoy without producing. It is not merely, if at all, idleness or fraud. It is the common bias of class and the sense of importance which every class inevitably feels. See how the people interested in education have clamoured for public money of late years. It is not merely those who wished to teach the doctrines of their sect, or the duty of the poor to be lowly and reverent to all their betters, who have dipped their hands into the public purse. It is the genuine belief of the tanner and currier that "there is nothing like leather." Thus educational enthusiasts have pointed out the urgent need for this and that educational reform. The hospitals might starve

for want of funds; the poor, when injured and sick, be compelled to lie on the floors of such institutions with such comfort as was possible there; but the University must be built by the aid of taxation and working men's subscriptions, for howsoever small a number of students. Educational experts must be engaged at fabulous cost to make reports however the people might groan under the local taxation. There must be more booklearning crammed into young, immature, and ill-fed brains, whatever the degeneration of body and mind and the poverty of the home. If the parents could not feed the children fit for the process the taxpayer must do so.

Nor is there any limit to the possible outcries for more expenditure of public taxes when once the notion is fully accepted that true progress lies in that direction. Housing to be done by the public authorities; landholding to be managed by officials at the public expense; allotments, small holdings, interference unlimited; anything is chosen rather than economy with a clear and simple mode of taxation. That might disturb existing vested interests and extractive alchemies generally. A workman or servant may not even manage his

own insurance against accident or be his own insurer. His wages must be reduced to form a general insurance fund through the liability of his employer for his accidents. Surely, nobody who has given the matter any thought imagines the cost of this insurance and all the paper, printing, and advertising it involves can fall otherwise than on wages. But it finds profit for a fresh class of non-producers serving, and backed by, wealthy people who are much more purely capitalists than employers are. Even those employers who insure themselves are only equalising the risks of idle and careless with more careful workmen, and the expense must be reckoned to the disadvantage on the average of wages.

There is already in existence a poor law system in this country. It is cumbrous and antiquated, made for quite other times and other conditions. It is said that of its cost only one-third reaches the poor. The other two-thirds are spent in administration. I do not hear much outcry for reduction of the waste. But there is definite promise of new expenditure on old age pensions. This must involve a fresh set of officials, for it is emphatically

demanded that this new poor relief must not be connected with the Poor Law. The one condition on which the pensions are to be granted seems to be that the recipients must not work. That is the great crime of modern times—competition. The argument for the expenditure of public money in this way is that workers become poor. But all who are of the requisite age may have the pension if they do not work, for it is to be understood that the pension is to carry no taint of poverty. It can only be a proof of leisure, and as the burden of society on the individual, of government on the people, continues to increase, the man who, crushed by the burden, can no longer endure it must turn out of the little homestead he has grown to love in order to qualify for his pension, wearing his heart out in a cottage and enforced leisure he does not love.

The worst of all this evil is that the extraction is not done in the manner least likely to disturb the operations of the taxpayers. Money is taken for public purposes which are not the wisest. The burden of its payment falls on those least able to bear it because a sound principle of taxation is not adopted. But the money

is obtained in such a manner that the hardship is increased still tenfold more. For instead of taking the money in the way of taxation with such justice or injustice of incidence as the tax may involve a further alchemy is created whereby the rich and idle may take the productions of the poor and industrious. This is the alchemy we call public debt. Some call portions of it capital. But in a word it means that on the public credit money is borrowed at interest: obviously from those who can spare it: and from those who carry on industrial operations taxes are collected annually to pay to those who are rich enough to deposit money with public authorities in this way. Here, as in the case of the untaxed land monopoly, the mischief is a double one. The money would have been used or advanced to aid in the purchase of those objects which directly or indirectly produce or afford subsistence. It is taken from the possibility of that use. Mankind is poorer for that reason. But the interest must be paid out of taxes levied on future production. This means luxury for some at the public cost and at the same time poverty for others because they must

bear the cost. This abuse will not be remedied without a better understanding of the nature of money than is prevalent at present. And we cannot dwell on it in these pages.

It is clear there are many alchemies besides that named "Rent and Law." It is equally clear, however, that they have all the same nature in the one respect we have mentioned. In every case they interpose some hindrance between the worker and the object of his effort. On what ground, therefore, can it be hoped that the evil of these interferences may be avoided by interposing something further between the labourer and his employment? That the something further assumes the form of a "bargainer general" for all the members of a trade, his policy and aim being to get them a better price for their labour than they could get without him, is positively no argument in favour of the scheme. That is clearly not going to bring the labourer into closer and more free contact with his work. It must inevitably depend on the bargainer general's power (however given to him) to keep employees from their employment whenever that separation is needed to aid his

bargaining. And if by this means he gets the better price there is no proof that more of comfort will be had for it.

"But," says Law, naming itself Solicitor-General, "trades unions are necessary to prevent this country becoming the paradise of the sweater," I had nearly called this blatant nonsense. But I must remember my manners, and the humility that becomes me, in the presence of wisdom worth £6000 a year, full pay for holidays and ample extras, a grand total of nearer £200 a week than £100. An alchemy that can accomplish that seems to be a much more effective contrivance than a vulgar sweating process. Sweating by ordinary means is crude compared with this means for effecting the desired object. To extract the essence without so much as touching the material substance is quite a refinement of method.

There is, it will be seen, considerable fitness in this advocacy by lawyers of the claims of the middle party. The lawyer has long been regarded as the milker of the cow while the disputants pulled one at the head and the other at the tail. Why should he not welcome into a posi-

tion of similar advantage another class of advocates of similar occupation?

But here again, as in the other cases, the alchemy of the bargainer general is a very wasteful one. It takes a great deal more out of the pockets of the disputants than it puts into the pockets of the alchemist. It is rather the case of the inhabitants of the workhouse "we sit enchanted here we know not why." The enchantment results in the idleness of hands that would be industrious. But the enchanter's reward is small in comparison to the loss of the enchanted. Enough has, however, been indicated concerning this alchemy without dwelling on it here.

We have said previously in effect that the first requisite for the right application and due reward of labour is knowledge. But among the requisite knowledge must be included a right understanding of social and economic science. This is what we lack. The physical scientist has done his work, and continues to do it: wonderful beyond realisation. The naturalist and the medical scientist have revealed to us a wealth of knowledge for our good. Only the social and political scientist has no result to show. Scarcely anything of what

he has proved is undisputed. And his science is in a deplorably backward condition even if we gather up all the best it has to offer.

But it need not be so if we could get rid of our prejudices. That, however, we shall not do until we pull up the root of them. The root has ramifications. But there is one great tap root for all the errors of theory which are sincerely held. The errors are all in the same direction and of the same nature. They consist of a desire to get money and to spend money as if that were some real substance, whilst in fact it is only a method of measuring and counting the shares in the actual objects desired. The real substance is made more plentiful by the very opposite means to those for which clamour is made.

When we get rid of the purely economic errors with which we are beset we shall get rid of some of the evils which appear to be other than strictly economic. Ten thousand unemployed march through the streets of London. A gilded youth who gazes on them remarks: "What a rotten lot." But whose fault is it if they appear and in fact are, degenerate? It is not a

separate problem. The problem of their degeneration is the problem of their poverty: their want of employment is the bad trade of the employer and the scanty wages of the worker. Pauperism, drunkenness, and crime are closely connected with the same causes. The solution is a more free and therefore more abundant production of subsistence.

The man who now calls himself social reformer denies this. He would have a separate solution of every problem or supposed problem to which he can give a name. More abundant production he regards as a curse. Yet he cannot altogether close his eyes to history and fact. Indeed, he gives his whole case away in a phrase. He sets himself to find a "social policy." In the course of his discussion of Poor Law he speaks of the "roaring sixties and seventies." What made those sixties and seventies roar instead of whining, as so many decades have done since? Some suggest that it was gold discoveries. But even more abundant gold discoveries have not had that effect recently. If we realise the increase of freedom and more abundant production which had their effect at that time we shall get nearer the truth.

CHAPTER XII.

Priestcraft and Exploitation.

"SCIENCE arises from the discovery of identity amidst diversity." My thanks are due to Professor Jevons for thus stating better than I could the thought I would express. We cannot dwell on the idea, but we have been seeing manifestations of it from the beginning onwards: identity of purpose amidst diversity of action; identity of result amidst diversity of method; identity of substance amidst diversity of form.

But all thought consists of a series of affirmatives and negatives expressed or implied. The affirmatives may appear alone, but every statement of fact is a negative of its opposite. And in all arguments there is of necessity considerable admixture of affirmative and negative from which the process of separation of that which is from that which is not must

take place. We can only discover that which is identical in the quality required by separating whatever is diverse in that quality. Everything we consider must, in that particular, exhibit either the identity or the diversity, and cannot exhibit both. This is plain irrefutable logic, and he who says he cannot see it simply cannot think and should cease to talk—on public questions, at any rate.

Nothing is more exasperating to those who have made any effort to understand these questions than to hear the affirmative-negative yes-and-no sort of talk that is indulged in. One hears it said that there is a sound socialism and an unsound or dangerous socialism. Now it is plain either that this sort of talk is impossible nonsense or that the two sorts of socialism are two different things. But one never hears any attempt to draw the line of distinction. The sound socialism is simply the socialism of the speaker one hears and the unsound socialism is that of somebody else—everybody else who differs from him.

If one socialism is good and another socialism is bad these two socialisms should be got into different clothes, even if the

bad is put into convict's garb, so that they may be distinguished: or some other means should be found for enabling us to distinguish them. I confess my inability to see the difference which some people say they see, and it is not for want of endeavour even if it is for want of capacity. Their instinct or moral sense it must be which enables them to find differences without distinctions that can be stated. But without possessing this superior instinct or moral sense I am prepared to state very definitely what makes good social conditions and what constitutes evil in society. I am ready, moreover, to give a reason for my distinction which some logicians have laid down as another indispensable quality of sound thinking.

It is futile to discuss social policy and reform on the assumption that it is dangerous to go too fast. The real question is whether the direction is right. The speed is a very minor question: an altogether negligeable question indeed: if the right course is being taken. There is no danger of going too fast in sound reform and sane policy. The danger is of going too slow in the matter of speed. There is

always enough support for existing abuses to avoid their being swept away too fast. But the more serious danger is that of going wrong. The risk is that further abuses should be added to those which already exist. Those who find a difference between their own socialism and the socialism of some other people without being able to state the distinction, are however, usually content to talk about the danger of moving too quickly in these matters. They have apparently no objection to the addition of further abuses, without limit, provided the abuses are given time to grow.

From the outset we have indicated excess of government meddling and interference as an evil. The burden of society (which means government) on the individual (which means all the people) we have pointed out as a hindrance and a curse. And why? Because it operated in a direction contrary to the motives of mankind detracting from their freedom and hindering their progress; in a material sense making them poor; from a social aspect, causing degeneration; from a benevolent point of view offering pain and distress for pleasure and happiness; in a

moral and higher significance destroying the whole motive and aspiration to better things. All that we observed in whatever could be regarded as an alchemy, extracting the result of one's labours for the benefit of another, was a fresh indication of the same facts and of the mode of accomplishment of these results.

The essential evil in all this was that it thwarted the purpose of human beings in their efforts to seek good in the most convenient manner: subsistence from the best and most accessible land; pleasure from the ties of nature and of kinship, the human love which counts sacrifice a joy as opposed to the compulsory sacrifice to which Nature affords no motive; happiness from a wider outlook upon the world and its people, the cultivation of higher and more artistic faculties, the relief of human sorrow; the increase of knowledge and the conception of the unseen. The good of this search is not denied. The only error is in the notion that the restriction and compulsion of government is likely to further it more than the freedom of individuals to pursue it for their own pleasure in accordance with their own natural motives.

But we may repeat in other words what we said in the previous chapter. Ruling, government, command, direction, guidance, is absolutely essential to the world's work and therefore to human progress.

One of the points on which mis-impression was given by Adam Smith relates to the qualifications of labour in his conception of it. His conception of value dependent on labour has been sufficiently refuted by subsequent economists, and value is now seen to be dependent on demand. But his statement that the annual labour supplies the necessaries and conveniences of life involves certain implications which he did not think it necessary to state specifically. Confining our thought to the labour itself we must clearly understand that labour to be useful for the purpose of human welfare must be conditioned by knowledge. Mere muscular exertion is no guarantee of production. It may be absolutely wasted. And at best it is the least valuable kind of work. The price of such labour is indicated by the fact that blind force can now be obtained out of steam engines at 1½d. per horse-power per week. To compete with that, mere man-

power would be worth a very low wage if the man had nothing but blind force to sell. And a further condition which is involved in this conception of labour is that the labour must be properly applied to the end to be accomplished. Labour unapplied or misapplied produces no value. All this necessitates and proves the utility of direction, control, ruling, government in a reasonable sense.

But Adam Smith himself never believed that all the surplus, between the worth of the mere muscular exertion or unguided toil, and the actual value of the object produced under trained intelligent direction, belonged to the person who had supplied the comparatively blind force. That folly was reserved for successors who took what he might have meant (if there had been nothing else in his writings to show that he did not mean it) and built up absurd doctrines of their own. Such in particular is this doctrine of a surplus value under which all that is earned is said to belong to the person who has supplied the humblest and least skilled portion of the effort that has contributed to the earning. As well might we say that all a man has earned with his horse

and cart belongs to the horse. The horse has done the work; the man has only given it guidance and control. But this lie is still running, more strongly than ever it would seem—"towards its hour."

The real test of the value of labour as of commodities is the unrestricted market. If a man can get what he regards as a sufficient improvement in his labour-reward by putting himself under guidance (whether to use costly tools or stock beyond his power of purchasing or not) he is likely to do so. And that involves control. The evil is in the conditions which prevent his finding an opportunity of doing this. These conditions we have indicated. The surplus value beyond the labour-reward he thus attains is not his. He already gets a surplus value beyond what he could get from his own labour undirected and without the costly tools which he is set to use. As a consuming member of the race he gets the final surplus in the increased opportunities for enjoyment of produce.

The labourer's chief interest is that the costly tools and machinery which aid his labour should be made as plentiful as possible that there may be more demand

for his labour; that a smaller proportionate share should be taken for the use of the tools because of the increased supply of them; and that the produce should be more abundant. All which involves that land should not be withheld from use or money congealed into public debt, thus preventing its running as currency among the producers and consumers. The fact that a nation or community has assets proves nothing whatever as to its having also debts any more than it does concerning an individual. But when the community borrows it literally compels the labourers to pay interest to capitalists through taxation, giving them no choice in the matter; favouring the rich at the expense of the poor; the idlers at the expense of the workers. Such a proceeding is more distinctly tyrannical than any private productive arrangements.

That the alleged surplus of which the labourer is supposed to be defrauded by the exploiter can be saved for him by any sort of government contrivance is palpably absurd. He does not get rid of supervision or need for supervision, or even diminish the guidance and control, by the change to government ownership.

The cost of such management is notably greater than is the cost of successful private adventures. That is where the surplus goes. And the supposed saving in interest on capital if it exists at all does not compensate for the extra cost of management. There is probably no saving whatever. For if the capital invested in private adventures does not afford interest it is to that extent written off as lost. But even when wasted and lost the borrowed money used in public enterprises must still bear its interest and the capital must eventually be repaid. This argument is, however, of no great importance save in one respect. In that it is conclusive. The exploiter's surplus is clearly and certainly represented in public undertakings by the salaries of officials and managers, and the interest paid on borrowed money, to the full extent of those outgoings. The merits and demerits of the case for any enlargement of public exploitation must be dealt with in view of all this, and not on the assumption that profit is inevitable, as seems so often the method at present.

There are, however, reasons quite independent of these economic arguments concerning surplus value why the sphere

of government has so increased and continues to increase. Somewhat various considerations must be borne in mind concerning government and the grounds of government. Possibly a rough classification or generalisation may be useful based on these grounds.

Taking a broad view over wide reaches of place and long stretches of time, we may distinguish two main sorts of governing power—knowledge and force or strength. The distinction is merely relative, not absolute. But it enables us to distinguish two chief classes of persons who in all ages of the world's history have been found in more or less of opposition as rivals for power. It is only as the governing power is misused, however, that the distinction is of the smallest importance. Both knowledge and force are requisite in any useful undertaking. It is the abuse which must be avoided; and that is apt to lean to one side or the other of the classification. Both classes have been very willing to increase their power at the expense of the governed, either singly or in combination. They have done it by modes characteristic to their particular

basis of government. Force and fraud, strength and craft, are but different modes of accomplishing the purpose.

The soldier-ruler, or lord, conquers the land and takes a portion of its produce for governing and defending the producer. But always there has been another class claiming superior knowledge, often assuming the power to guard against evil, or obtain good, from the unseen; for the employment of which they have required material reward. The rites of religion, skill in medicine or in law have been their sword. But those who have held the earthly power of religion in their hands have at times been able openly to defy, or command, the most powerful rulers, whilst the other sections have hitherto exercised their power in the names of the rulers rather than their own. It is obvious, however, that ruling in this fashion is liable to abuse equally with government by force.

This is not to be regarded as a sweeping condemnation of all or any government. We may accept the existence of government as a fact likely to continue, and to operate alongside the conduct of private persons. The principles of government

which a ruler adopts, like those of a private person's conduct, may be good or bad. That is a question of ascertainment with sufficient amount of thought and investigation. No word of what has been said on this point shall be retracted. But human life and activity is not guided accurately by reason and principle. At best it is a bundle of compromises, a compound of human strength and weakness in different respects; the result of intentions more or less good, carried out more or less successfully, with more or less of vigour and understanding.

But here are the two forms more or less distinct which abuses of power are apt to take because the power is based on the two supports of physical force and mental superiority; not always equally on the two. Moreover, in the progress of human civilisation the two forms of power have changed their modes of operation to a considerable extent. The possible utility to the individuals of government by physical force, necessarily under some guidance, must not be denied. And the influence of mind over mind is equally important if rightly used.

The physical strength of man could at all times be used in peaceful arts and the cultivation of the earth just as certainly as it could be used in warfare and killing. But knowledge has come in to aid him in supplying physical force for both purposes. The marvellous engines of industrial occupations, the extent and number of which we cannot fully realise, have their counterpart in deadly engines of warfare.

So also with the power over mind. The very increase of our command of physical force has come by way of mind and its knowledge; enabling man to use the forces of Nature around him. All which implies the teaching and training of the great number by the few; with the research, investigation, and invention by which alone that could have been made possible; the penetration of Nature's secrets. And beyond that is the effect of the moral qualities of the best on their inferiors whereby physical, mental, and moral progress has been made possible. The prophet, preacher, poet, artist, scientist, teacher, writer, are worthy of their maintenance if their work has been well and wisely done, even if it be only for the aid they have given through the

minds of producers, by instruction or inspiration, towards the actual production.

It is not in the separate classification that the good or evil is found. Force of a physical nature is good if rightly used. Knowledge is even better if properly applied. It is in the misuse and misapplication that the mischief occurs. And whenever a body or organisation of men forgets its duty to mankind and thinks only of its own advantage there is more than danger of such mischief. There is less danger from the individual doing this. If he as an individual misuses physical force, regardless of the recognised rights of others, he is a criminal. Society, through its government, treats him as an enemy, and he suffers accordingly. If he abstracts material objects without due equivalent he pays the penalty prescribed by law. All this assumes that he is not a ruler.

But even an individual operating on the minds of men instead of by physical force may do very considerable mischief without being regarded as a criminal. What he does in error though with sincere desire to benefit them we may dismiss from

notice. What he does by intentional disregard of all interests but his own is quite another matter. Yet even that is beyond our strict scope. It is when in pursuance of his own advantage he sets up a widespread doctrine and an organisation of men; the definite purpose of which is to abstract subsistence from other men; without sufficient proof that the doctrine and organisation render service; that this operation on men's minds can become a curse.

Here is the great danger of progressive civilisation. It is a greater danger in an advanced society than in a ruder condition of affairs. In the latter the physical force more frequently brings the bravest, whom Carlyle calls the best, to the front and destroys shams in a rough and ready fashion. The appeal to physical force does frequently get to the root of the matter when all other appeals fail. "Feather-brain, whom no reasoning and no pleading could touch, the glare of the firebrand had to illuminate; there remained but that method." But even that assumes that the physical force is not only sufficiently strong but sufficiently well guided. And it does not in the least diminish the vast

possibilities of evil from the misuse of physical force. The point under observation is that much evil may be done to society in an apparently peaceful manner; as well as by the use of open despoliation aided by more or less effective implements of warfare and destruction.

Now, if we give to this evil the name of priestcraft as conveying some concept in a single word, care must be taken that the meaning conveyed is that which is intended and not another. It implies no smallest particle of disrespect to religion. There could be no priestcraft in this evil sense, concerning itself with religion at all, were it not for the existence of religion worthy of honour. It is the conception of the unseen influencing the minds of men for good which enables the priest to obtain power and advantage for himself by his craft. He thus mixes evil with the good in order to obtain an advantage for himself. It is exploitation, in the bad signification that has been given to that term. But this mixture of evil with the good is not a reason for destroying the good in order to be rid of the evil. That is exactly what we have argued against from the beginning. It is refusing life lest it should

be followed by death. It is restricting activity as a cure for the idleness that already exists. It is pulling down the highest because something holds it from going higher.

Moreover, the priestcraft is not a necessary accompaniment of religion at all. The Puritans were not less, but rather more, religious than those who accepted their religion only through the rites of the church at the hands of the priests. Their belief in God was none the less sincere and profound because they did not believe in the exclusive claim of a visible organisation to speak for Him. The efficacy of prayer did not depend to them upon the ministrations of a priesthood. Their refusal to regard the sacraments as the only means of salvation was the direct result of their confidence and spiritual experience that the grace of God was free for all. This was what they learnt from Christianity itself; they had the words of Christ Himself as their authority; and the power of religion in their lives was the greater, their realisation of its spirit and doctrines the higher and truer for this elimination of the priest from between themselves and the God they worshipped.

And on the other hand, priestcraft in essence does not confine its undesirable attendance to religion. It may not in other connections be generally known by that name but it is none the less identical in its nature whether it is applied to religion or to other aspects of life. Whatever is mysterious presents the danger of this sort of parasitism. In the early phases of human society we have the medicine man and the rainmaker. To what extent the medicine man is really useful to the more ignorant men around him we need not argue. It may be, as it has been recently suggested, that his good sense and practical wisdom is superior to that for which he has sometimes had credit: that he is not merely a charlatan. But however excellent may be his advice and service with respect to physical health and other personal matters, we may rest assured that he exercises no control over the rainfall or other meteorological conditions.

The progress of civilisation involves increased variety and specialisation. But the differentiation is of slow growth. And for long periods the practice of religious rites and the knowledge of physical science remain in the same set of individuals.

They naturally form a craft even when they live and act singly. There is a bond of sympathy and understanding between them. And they endeavour to guard closely their secret mysteries from all but those who are designed for the priesthood. They may worship the Sun or the Ancestors; in a Druidical circle or an Egyptian temple; but the power of their superior knowledge must be maintained.

If in the course of years or centuries men arise to dispute the priestly monopoly of knowledge appealing to the visible ascertainable facts around them in support of their defiance such men are likely to fare ill at the hands of the mystery-mongers. It is not to be expected that they should lightly yield their power. But when the new learning has fully established itself against the opposition of the older priesthood it must not for a moment be imagined that the professors of the new doctrine will be free from the spirit of the priest in the older establishment. A writer has recently suggested that there is a great deal of the evil spirit of the medicine man in the profession of medicine at this time. Be that as it may, there is undoubtedly a great deal of honest, noble,

and even self-sacrificing work by men in that profession, coming as they do into direct contact with suffering humanity. But secular learning, especially when separated from contact with the working, suffering world, is as full of exclusiveness and prejudice, of all that is only worthy of the name of priestcraft, as ever the older craft of mystery and religion can be proved to have been.

Nor is the priestcraft confined to mysteries that are really beyond the ken of common mortals. In the autumn of 1906 the Socialist leader of one of the sections of Labour with a capital L in the British Parliament took a tour round the world. He did not go as a commercial traveller to promote the interchange of material products between countries of varying capabilities and facilities for production. Nor did he go as a missionary of empire. So far as the trip was not purely a pleasure trip it was turned to account, however, by a series of journalistic contributions. One of such contributions related to Canada, and appeared in a leading provincial newspaper, doubtless among others.

It was a most interesting sample of the latest form of priestcraft. To have set

forth the conditions of Canada in such a fashion as to indicate that there was need for a bargainer-general to restrict competition and production would have been an impossibility. Competition, whether altogether damnable or only needing to be restricted, would not have been very productive of ready denunciation in the light of the facts there visible. But that created no difficulty. For that was not at all the aspect in which the facts were regarded. The discussion of the article was not on the need for intermediaries between wage-earning and wage-paying producers. The whole investigation related to the possibility and chances of success of a Labour party. It would be difficult to conceive a more exact counterpart of what might be expected from a Jesuit missionary going out to further the interests of the "Holy Mother Church" among a population of heretical Protestants, Puritans, Quakers, Methodists, and the like.

It is not, however, a very deep or mysterious doctrine on which this latest priestcraft is based. Doubtless the writer of that article would have found a hell of some sort from which he was prepared to save the votaries of his creed. For it

must be borne in mind that this sort of intervention is more usually designed to ward off evil than to bring good. It is always so easy to imagine the curse which has to be avoided. Though in the case before us it was not very visible. But whether to avoid evil or to bring good the argument here must be of the same kind. We have not the alternative of appeasing the powers of darkness by devil worship or seeking good in reverence for Light and Love. We have simply the fact of man's need for material comfort. This reaches him usually through the medium of exchange—money. It always comes through this channel to the man who is known as wage-earner. Money seems as important to him as rain does to the savage in a dry land. And the professed service of this modern representative of priestcraft in a fresh aspect is to force more of this liquid currency out of the sources from which it usually comes. He is the rain-maker up to date.

Of all the possible bases of a priesthood this seems the worst. It is a sordid doctrine at best. It appeals to the lowest part of human nature. An appeal directed especially to human love of ease and plenty

may be sufficiently effective for the purposes of those who wish to profit by the appeal. But this is exactly that part of the human mind which requires no eloquence to set it moving; and its movements can only be consistent with the progress of the race if it moves automatically and of necessity while the consciousness is fixed on something higher. To fix the attention on these purely material objects as objects to be obtained by extraneous help is to take a downward trend. The craft that offers knowledge has a better argument for its existence than this, even though it may assume exclusive and mysterious superiority. The medicine man has at any rate a sound basis for his existence. If on occasion he assumes a knowledge and skill he does not possess it is difficult to blame him overmuch provided he has done his best to know. The priest of religion has great temptation to exceed the line at which mere humanity should stop. But he has a work in which his separation from material cares to learn and teach the higher truths should help mankind if he uses his office rightly. These other crafts have certainly a basis

of helpfulness. This latter has no such basis.

Moreover, the claim it makes is so palpably impossible that it ought to deceive no one of intelligence. It deals with a world of visible material objects and with motives which are simple and measurable. It can be shown to perfect demonstration that no benefit can come from it. This is quite a different thing from the claims made by the older priestcrafts; say what we may against them. They have their sphere in a world beyond the view of ignorant people. It is a realm of mind and spirit to which the mass of the people have little access. The elimination of priestcraft in religion by an intense spirituality such as the Puritans enjoyed is only possible in a condition of high intelligence. It involves the general distribution of all the qualifications of priesthood. In lower states of humanity knowledge is much more limited. And this is the opportunity for good (not necessarily for evil) to him who has the superior knowledge. His turning it to dishonest selfish advantage is the evil. At all times there are worlds of thought and consciousness beyond the reach of ordinary men

and women. The musician lives in a world of sound, and the artist in a world of light and colour which are only opened to common mortals on rare occasions and often enough by the aid of these priests of art. There is a possibility of good priescraft though the word chiefly signifies the bad.

The inventor for instance brings from another world of thought and consciousness a knowledge which gives mankind new power. He looks into a realm of mind to which other men have no access, or have made no attempt to penetrate, and sees there forces running wild and waste which he proceeds to tame for useful service. He catches the wind and compels it to turn his mills and drive his carrying vessels. He kindles fire for his warmth and holds it in subjection to his will. Forests of ages ago buried and crushed into a hard black substance he finds will yield him obedience bearing loads and exerting force to which his own puny strength bears no comparison. This wizard-priest brings lightning from the clouds, sends along simple looking wires the power to do innumerable sorts of work. He records and reproduces know-

ledge and appeals to the senses in a way that staggers the uninitiated mind at sight of his command over unseen forces and invisible communications across mere space. This is a basis for priestcraft at which we may marvel, tremble, and obey.

But nothing of this kind applies to the priest of materialism who makes his claim upon us. He does not offer to bring unseen forces of Nature to our aid. He does not propose to produce more utilities in material objects. There is no intention or desire on his part to attack refractory material substances and convert them into objects useful to mankind. In that way he might help us. He might even compel others to give more money for labour and exertion by offering to do so himself; or he would equally render service if he gave more of these useful objects for an equal amount of money. That, of course, would be competition. This is not his purpose. Rather does he join with the "denizen in Mayfair" and other persons who "have no function but that of going idle in a graceful or graceless manner, and of begetting sons to go idle: and to address chief spinners and diggers who at least *are* spinning and

digging, " Ye scandalous persons who produce too much."

Yet he would have all believe that by this means he will increase the amount which the producers will enjoy. If the employees will give him a portion of what they now enjoy and will be prepared to stop their producing at a given signal (thus stopping the receipt of that out of which they are to give him a share) he will compel the employers to give those to whom he ministers the whole or part of the surplus which the employers now get. That is a plain and unbiassed statement of his case. It is the surplus of the employers by which the thought of all the adherents of the now prevalent doctrine is obsessed. They are bent on getting that surplus from the employers whether by law, taxation, combination, or government ownership. They are prepared to ensure that there shall be no surplus rather than the employers shall have it. They are willing even to lose what the employee ɔw enjoys in order to prevent the employer getting a surplus from it.

The ignorance of this priestcraft is palpable beyond description, although it is the basis of modern hopes of social

reform. If its advocates cannot see that the ultimate and most desirable surplus goes to the mass of the people as consumers they might at least try to understand that employers will not continue their employing unless there is something left for them. They might learn with a little consideration that employers are also human beings aiming at the best wage for themselves like employees, but neither able nor willing to work or produce without a surplus. This rainmaker can make no rain. All he can do is to dry up the springs.

Nor is the morality of the doctrine greater than its efficacy; its want of ethical recommendation is as plain as its ignorance. The doctrine does not say "We will bring you from heaven or earth, or both, a greater abundance for your comfort." It says, "If you will be content to produce less you shall take a share of that which is now enjoyed by your masters." It is only possible as a doctrine for discussion so long as the mind is kept on money, the channel through which the substance comes, instead of the substance itself. But the basis of modern reform is that the employer gets too much and must be deprived of part of it. No such result

follows. There is a diminution of employers so that the remainder get an even larger proportion if they can endure the pressure at all. This is hailed as a good sign. A prophet of this creed has foretold that production would get into ever fewer hands until a revolution would occur and take it all into the hands of the government. It is a prophecy of evil largely fulfilling itself. But the people suffer meantime. And the imagined good will never come. It is deplorably true that the wages and conditions of employment are far from being ideal. But the progress of this doctrine obviously fails to improve them.

If the doctrine did improve the material conditions of the people we might hope for other good results from it. We indicated in the previous chapter how much might be hoped from the greater abundance enjoyable by all towards removing the evils of pauperism, drunkenness, and crime. But aiming at a low ideal it shoots so low as to miss even that. That very ideal could only be reached by aiming higher. Modern reformers have in their hands the New Testament and have read or heard a hundred times, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all

these things shall be added unto you." But they have learnt nothing from it. They persist in their doctrine, "Take away other men's material good and the kingdom of heaven shall arrive." If they would really look the facts in the face it would matter little at what point they started. They might start with justice and righteousness, and they would arrive at peace and plenty with an ever advancing possibility for both. They might commence with the never ceasing need for material subsistence. They would learn that it is only to be had by justice and freedom which is righteousness. Then they would seek the higher ideal as the best means of attaining and surpassing the lower.

But they deliberately shut their eyes to the facts. Says one in cold print: "I would not put Smiles' 'Self-Help' into the hands of a boy." Whether he judges the book by acquaintance or repute I do not know. I fancy the latter. Smiles has been denounced beyond measure for some time. And if I were engaged in putting blinkers on the human mind I would not give that book to a boy. He would acquire such a store of facts that he would

never believe in the possibility of benefiting mankind by a process of organised appropriation. He might even lose his credulous faith in the virtue of mobs if he had such a faith. He would probably realise that the community, the mass, is rather a pulpy sort of thing to be acted upon for good or evil by the individual. He would learn (quite contrary to the usual suggestion) that really worthy work is not to be expected from thinking too much of the reward. The only danger I should apprehend from his reading would be lest he should become ambitious to do truly great things and thus injure himself in a time when the gospel is "Do as little as possible and as far as you can stop other people doing." For the time being restriction and destruction is regarded as the way to success and human happiness, and it is necessary to be selfish and cautious.

The evil is in the creed. No disparagement is offered to those who honestly (though with insufficient understanding) hold it. But the direct result of this modern gospel of envious mammonism—material good not directly from the material earth but from the wealth of the wealthy—is by no means its only mischief. It is

itself a hindrance to the attainment of the comfort it professes to offer. But it is also the cause which prevents the adoption of the right means for attaining the desirable object. There is no wonder that the Jesuit of Labour who sees in Canada only a prospecting ground for establishing his organisation should announce in Parliament his opposition to any land system which would restore the old English yeoman to existence. The yeoman made England in the best sense in which it has been made; he was the basis of all that is best in the English race whether on English soil or among nations beyond the sea. But he was no friend of chains and muzzles for humanity and no tolerator of priestcraft. What could a bargainer-general do between employers and employed in a county of yeomen, aided as the case might be with one or two assistants, in stern conflict with Nature's niggardliness? The only place for his craft must be in the way of officials between a cultivator inferior in all respects to a yeoman and those wealthier persons whose non-existence would jeopardise his craft altogether.

Thus, instead of a just and righteous system of taxation calculated to free the land from its present enforced idleness and set upon it industrious hands, we have offered to us peddling schemes for allotments and small holdings. The land must be had from large landowners who do not themselves use it, but they must be paid perpetually a rent for the privilege of allowing this portion of the earth to be used. And the negotiations for this transaction with landowner and with the occupying small holders are to be conducted by public officials—the bargainer-general again in another form. Thus far we have progressed. I read of oppression of savage natives in a region the narrative of the discovery of which has always been an inspiration to me. I think of the days when we used to hear accounts of missionary enterprise all the world over, to turn the earth to righteousness and uplift with the gospel, not to oppress its benighted peoples. I wonder if at least a Christian government cannot do something to stop actual oppression. I lift up my eyes to look and see the newspaper placards are filled with government occupation on—small holdings. They are paltry matters

—small holdings! As if forsooth it should be the business of a government to decide whether holdings should be small or large: instead of seeking a righteous method of taxation and thus freeing the land to be used in such holdings as are found convenient to the particular circumstances. But, of course, that leaves no room for the official and the bargainer-general.

Thus we get offered what is called a solution of the land question though it is no solution at all—only an increase of complication and tying of more knots. And beyond that we have offered as a separate problem to be solved in similar fashion the housing question. There are 20,000 empty houses in London alone; and other large centres of population are in similar condition. But it seems more money is wanted to be spent by government upon housing. These houses are of the wrong sort. I know a house in another large city which for twelve months in succession I have observed to remain empty—it may have been vacant longer than that. But I have not ventured to apply for it. That is not, however, because the house is of the wrong sort. There is quite another reason. And I

know that the occupant whenever it is occupied will have to pay the local authority about half the amount of the rent for permission to occupy it and take water from the tap, in addition to what he may pay for rent.

It does not occur to the people who advocate this housing enterprise that it costs money to occupy houses not only for rent and rates, but also for the upkeep. They imagine they can continue making contrivances for taking the surplus and destroying the possibility of a surplus, and if thereafter empty houses should abound it must be because the houses are of the wrong sort. Consequently, they propose a remedy. There are men whose whole life has been given to the study of the problem of housing as a means of earning their own livelihood. They have studied how to meet the needs and desires of occupants in the matter of situation, plan, accommodation, finish, and all else, how also to provide what is wanted in the most economical way possible. Many of such men—by no means fools—have failed in spite of their efforts and are now working with their tools in Canada or the United States. The strongest, and surely here the fittest,

survive. But they, too, it seems are incapable. And now it is proposed in view of all these empty houses to set on some subordinate officials from public departments, who have had no practical experience of the work, who know nothing but schoolboy theory, and they are to show these "old hands" how the business should be done.

The worst of it is that neither these juniors nor the people who set them on will have to bear the loss. That will be borne by the people called the public, chief among whom in this respect will be the "old hands" whose struggle is hard enough already; though their competence for the work is beyond all comparison greater than will be exercised by compulsion of the authorities so largely at their expense. Speculative building, the trade into which public authorities have increasingly entered of late, is a difficult trade. The only safeguard against indefinite waste of resources by it is the inevitable failure of the private person who manages it badly. Municipalities, unfortunately, can engage in it as public authorities at private expense. And thus we have them, for instance, building long rows

of shops half or more than half of which stand empty for years. This is specific fact not exaggerated. But while in the hands of private persons this would lead to the Official Receiver in Bankruptcy; in the hands of public authorities it only leads to distress among the poorest.

These, however, are only samples of what results from the doctrines we have noticed. There is abundance of meddling to produce further mischief, but no attempt to understand and remove the real causes of poverty. The greatest cause of poverty at this time is the enormous increase of public debt all the world over. So far from attacking this evil, present-day social reformers are quite content to see and help the continual growth of public debt, provided only the money is spent in the fashion they approve. And such fashions do they approve. The case of Irish Land Stock is a case in point. It was actually brought about by a party from whom we might expect it, but it had the approval of a party from whom we had a right to expect something different.

Ireland had lost a good deal of its population, and it must have been seen that the outlook for land values was not good

for landowners. Be that as it may, a large scheme for sale to tenants was decided upon, and to accomplish it a sum of £12,000,000 was arranged to be added to the price it was considered fair the tenants should pay. This was calm unblushing robbery of English taxpayers for the pockets of Irish landlords; dishonesty on a large scale; but as it was done by government it was no crime. Observe the effect. One Irish landlord, for instance, sold his Irish estates under this scheme and forthwith bought two large estates immediately adjoining a large and growing industrial town in England. That same landlord is already throttling the expansion of another larger town by immense estates owned by him on the two sides of its most natural growth. A little of a more scientific sort of taxation would have afforded more justice to Ireland without thrusting the English poor back to greater poverty by the threefold curse thus inflicted upon them; more taxation to make the price tempting to vendor; more public debt taking purchasing power which should be aiding production; and more untaxed monopoly of land to hinder both production and housing still further.

But social reformers see no good in anything which does not increase the sphere of meddlesome government and the bargainer-general.

What among all this of the man we call employer? The working aristocracy is Carlyle's description of him, though he calls him also Bucanier and Chactaw Indian because he fights for mere plunder and scalps, instead of more permanent government and right control. Yet says he: "It is for ever indispensable for a man to fight, now with Necessity, now with Barrenness, Scarcity, with Puddles, Bogs, tangled Forests, unkempt Cotton: now also with the hallucinations of his poor fellow Men."

This is the exploiter: he who in the true and good sense exploits or applies labour to its ends and purposes. He must know the thing to be done and get it done. He deals with physical forces and must understand them. But he also deals with human beings and should get to understand them. His lack of sympathy with his kind seems to have been Carlyle's complaint against him. He holds a difficult post in these days when those who claim an exclusive monopoly of the way

of good (as your true priestcraft of the evil sort always does) deem themselves specially called to the work of destroying him. Even those who admit the necessity of his existence and the wisdom of permitting him to continue regard themselves as existing to defend themselves against his evil proclivities.

To be captain of industry under such circumstances is not an enviable task, unless the man is of iron and his heart of stone. Regarded as a foe to his species he must be ready to meet the designs of those who foment mutiny among his soldiers unless he will consent to bargain with his soldiers through the bargainer-general. Then he finds himself captain only of the implements with a rival in power as captain in a considerable sense of the men. If he is a capable man able to deal with his check-captain (the bargainer-general) in a skilful manner he may succeed well enough. But even then it is only a success of the Bucanier and Chactaw Indian sort for plunder and scalps. Under these conditions no other sort of success is possible. He is to his men a foe to be constantly watched, and the bargainer-general is there to watch him as

a dangerous person. The sympathy between master and man which should aid their joint efforts and smooth their working relations is utterly inconceivable under conditions of this kind.

An organisation of industry which cannot be carried on without a counter organisation introducing the walking delegate and bargainer-general is a thing impossible as a permanency. But let it be clearly understood that municipal or public ownership is no cure for this defect. The bargainer-general claims right, equally in public as in private enterprise, to oversee the wages and conditions of the work. He is already a difficulty in public departments and becomes increasingly so. The difficulty is met in some private concerns by a method of operation which effectually destroys all desire to stop work when work is to be had. The product is of a high class realising good prices. A high average price is paid for labour by time or piece, and the wage earners are dispensed with, for the time, as soon as by the use of the utmost dispatch the work in hand is accomplished. This is effective for the employers, and is essential under the cir-

cumstances, but it cannot be called the best for the men.

All this leaves the employer a Bucanier and Chactaw Indian. Whatever may be his desires for a higher conception of his duties as a leader of industry and of men he is almost precluded from seeking their fulfilment. Because he is an employer—or to use the confused-erroneous term generally used a capitalist—he is viewed with the utmost suspicion. As a person of authority and honour, a ruler in effect, the man who never did anything but talk, and that mostly nonsense, is greatly preferred by an ignorant people who have been misled into regarding their real leaders as their foes. The employer on whose management their wages depend very naturally declines to be insulted by their rejection of his offers to serve them in any public capacity, and sticks to his money making. Government and public affairs thus fall into the hands of those who have never carried any burden of the management of industry and have often neither capacity nor desire to understand all the factors which tend to prosperity in the best sense. But whither

must this tend from a national point of view?

It is true that if the employer is the villainous person he is so often represented to be the remedy is not with him. But in that case the bargainer-general should attempt actually to do something instead of talking and hindering the doings of others. Let him start his industry on co-operative lines. It is well to remind him that something besides talk, twaddle, and claptrap is required for the management of industry. But let him try.

If, however, the employer is not this villainous person he should learn his duty and do it. It involves the fighting with hallucinations which we just mentioned. "Hallucinatory visions rise in the head of my poor fellow man: make him claim over me rights which are not his. All fighting, as we noticed long ago, is the dusty conflict of strengths, each thinking itself the strongest, or in other words the justest: of Mights which do in the long run, and forever will in this just universe in the long run, mean Rights. In conflict the perishable part of them, beaten sufficiently, flies off in dust: this process

ended, appears the imperishable, the true and exact."

The employer cannot well take the whole ground taken in this chapter. He would be misunderstood. But he can lead in the conflict against two or three great evils from which he suffers almost equally with the poor. Humanity groans under a load of oppressive and restrictive taxation. That hurts master-producer and servant-producer alike in most cases. The huge overgrown trust is no better than the ever-absorbing municipality. But the burden of taxation next to its injury of the poor hurts the middle class producer. Let him attack it. The untaxed land monopoly is another evil in which his interests are clearly identical with those of humbler sons of toil. He bears a burden thrown upon him by idlers who "are innocent of producing. Certain fox-brushes nailed upon our stable door, the fruit of fair audacity at Melton Mowbray, these we have produced and they are openly nailed up there." All that is involved in this land question cannot be here indicated. But let the master-worker get an understanding of it and he will find that he can go into the fray side by

side with his assistant-workers and lead them to a victory of which the honour may be his, and the more material fruit theirs, who are in greater need.

The greatest social evil of all at this present time we have stated to be the huge burden of public debt and its unprecedented increase all the world over. What patience or toleration can the master-worker have for this? The subject has not had treatment in these pages. It is too large to be treated incidentally with hope of adequate clearness, and must have a separate publication. But every master worker must realise the hindrance to his operations and to the employment by which the poor must be fed. There is little need to argue with him on the importance of the matter. All that is necessary is that his benevolence and public spirit should be roused so that he may see the duty that lies upon him outside his own private interests.

The poor for whom he must undertake this duty may not be grateful for his efforts. They may even hate and attack him the more for them. That is a question of his reward which ought not to occupy his attention. The question for him to

consider is his duty. There are men who tell him openly they would like to see a capitalist (meaning an employer) hanging on every lamp post along miles of road. Let him pity them; not as sinners, for who made him a judge in that matter? but as persons who have gone through a hell of mental anguish to reach that condition of hatred. Let him think of their misguidance, of the poverty and hopeless distress through which they are passing; of the despair more visible because the sun shines and the earth calls while they are forbidden to obey; of the tenfold worse despair and bottomless abyss to which they are being lured by the counsel that is offered them. And if he still needs incitement to face conflict for the just and right; strife for the good and pitiful; with possible obloquy as his reward, let him fall back on his faith and his conception of the unseen. In a world of pessimists whose creed of hatred comes from their weakness, the optimist is he who dares to suffer and be strong. The sublimest spectacle as it is the greatest tragedy in this earth's history is that of the world's Highest and Best hanging twixt earth and heaven, between two malefactors,

as the victim of priesthood and hate. With that Sacrifice before him, and reaping the untold advantages that he enjoys to-day as its result, who shall dare to flinch from his known duty or say that this is no concern of his?

A sense of injustice and wrong will always bring hatred to all but the highest minds. A few may be filled with a diviner pity even by their suffering. But the clear call to the man who sees the suffering through ignorance, even though the suffering may be self-inflicted and accompanied by hateful envy, is to go out and teach the better way. Let him not be deterred by the ignorant cant and the superior humbug of those who are content with a yes-and-no, not-too-fast, avoid-extremes sort of belief. He may disturb their all-sufficient serenity and get himself called half-educated, or some terrible thing of that sort. But these people with their sophisms and their learned platitudes are really a negligeable quantity, and do not count in the history of mankind. What is important to us is the fact that deep down in the dungeons of their own dark souls are men and women who have forgotten God and have no faith in good; who need men of illumined

hearts and intelligent minds to bring them light and fire from the Soul of the Infinite. This will not be accomplished by allowing and encouraging these enslaved souls with all their feeling of injustice and of hate to dwell upon their wrongs. But it will do them good to show them their rights, not neglecting their duties, and how they may attain a realisation of both.

Their rights will not be attained and their wrongs will not be adjusted by any attempt to appropriate the surplus; which is the whole groundwork of current theories. The hope of mankind depends on an entire reversal of that specious doctrine which underlies so many proposals. Mankind must be set free to make that surplus larger. They will do it of their own free will when the barriers are removed. The increased surplus will be the means, the only means, of carrying greater abundance to the poor. And at the same time it will be the means of increasing the possibilities of greater surplus still in the future. All which indicates that there is no need for, or advantage in, restricting competition and checking production. It also indicates that there is no place in an enlightened world for a man to interfere between

buyers and sellers whether of commodities or labour.

The bargainer-general is not a permanent factor of industry. He represents the solidarity of labour of which we hear so much. Solidarity of thickheadedness! As if labourers could have an interest in making it difficult to offer them employment, or human creatures needing to consume could be better for hindering production in order to make produce scarce and costly. But the bargainer-general is often enough worthy in himself. There is no need for the employer to attack him personally. He represents, in fact, the best light of this age. But the light is darkness. There must be better light. The salt has lost its savour. And when these two palpable abuses of untaxed land monopoly and public debt have been cleared away, there will be better work found for the bargainer-general. For the time being he stands for a theory and a method of reform which is increasing the evil of those abuses. Our task, however imperfectly performed, has been to show that this so called solidarity does not exist; that the wage earner and the wage payer, the small distributor and the large merchant, the

street hawker and the great shipowner, have the one interest in common that men and the means of production should be free and production should be as plentiful as freedom involves. It is the solution of the problem. And it is also the way to a higher plane of morality and religion.

In one sense these are secular and material matters. So far the doctrines are capable of conclusive proof. But we must be touched with a diviner fire ere we are willing to give our effort to establish their truth. All along we have been forced to notice the claims of religion. We need not be ashamed to teach the truth which makes men free because incidentally and as a secondary result it makes them rich. It is well, however, to keep our motives on a high level. And if we are moved by the Spirit of Truth we shall feel it our own freedom and joy to spread the light. For this we may appeal as we have done to the highest motives of all.

We do not forget that appeals have been made by others; for authority to pull down instead of to lift up. These have, however, never been sanctioned by the Master. His direction was to help and not to hinder. Only by forgery can His

authority be claimed for fencing the ninety and nine with restrictions. His plan was to seek and save the one. And when in that and other respects we shall have applied His philosophy to our economics, we shall have attained something worthy of strenuous strife throughout our short day on earth. And if despite our effort we fail to achieve the result we seek we can at least be

> "Content to labour through the night
> That others greet the morning."

If your argument shows anything — and all quite sound — it shows some inherent flaw in taking Christs life as a universal model. Only the future will reveal the effects of subjugating individua
ociety, in this sense you mea

INDEX.

Abstractions—114, 285 *et seq.*
Agriculture—40 *et seq.*
Alchemies—290, 307, 316 *et seq.*, 359.
Altruism—16, 121 *et seq.*, 153 *et seq.*, 204 *et seq.*
America—30, 43, 48, 49, 240, 390.
Anglo-Saxon Race—75.
Antiquity of Man—2, 3, 6.
Art and Science—4, 380.
Assyrians—66.
Austin's Jurisprudence—154.

Babylon—67.
Bargainer general—350, 394, 395-6, 404.
Birth rate—105, 114, 115.
British Association—290.
Bucanier—394, 395, 397.
Burden of Society—18, 57, 66 *et seq.*, 74, 75, 77 *et seq.*, 109 *et seq.*, 126, 348, 358.

Calcutta, Black Hole of—117 *et seq.*, 126, 127.
Canada—375-6, 387, 390.
Capital—25, 215 *et seq.*, 232 *et seq.*, 236-8.
Carlyle, Thos.—9, 272, 317, 319 *et seq.*, 335 *et seq.*, 370, 394
Chactaw Indian—394, 395, 397.
Cheapness—30, 174, 228 *et seq.*, 279, 360.
Children—90 *et seq.*, 109 *et seq.*
Chinese labour—229.
Christianity—71 *et seq.*, 129, 130, 140, 162 *et seq.*, 200, 202, *et seq.*, 372, 388.
Christian philosophy — 166, 210, 384, 406.
Christian Sacrifice—72 *et seq.*, 401 *et seq.*
Colonies—75, 280.
Comfort, Standard of—46, 107 *et seq.*, 299 *et seq.*, 325.
Competition—87, 116, 121, 129 *et seq.*, 143 *et seq.*, 214, 277 *et seq.*, 295, 306, 329.
Comte's Socialism—164.
Conservatism—3, 323.
Consumers—8 *et seq.*, 20, 30, 46, 47, 253 *et seq.*
Co-operation—87, 117, 144, 276.
Corn Laws—18, 319 *et seq.*
Crops, Rotation and Change of —40 *et seq.*
Cultivation, Margin of—23, 24, 39, 44 *et seq.*, 333.

Darwin, Charles—176, 316, 317
Degeneration—98, 105, 114, 283 319, 353-54.
Demand, Artificial—299 *et seq.*, 329.
Demand determines price—294 *et seq.*, 307.
Demand for commodities not "demand for labour"—18, 19, 310 *et seq.*
Devil take the hindmost—95 *et seq.*, 117 *et seq.*
Diana of the Ephesians—293.
Diminishing returns, law of —39 *et seq.*
Distribution of wealth—307 *et seq.*, 329 *et seq.*
Division of labour—183 *et seq.*
Divorcement of worker from work—334, 350.

Economic man—6 *et seq.*, 21, 22-34.
Economic rent—21 *et seq.*
Edison—84, 99.
Education—163, 345, 346.
Egyptians—66, 374.
Elements of production—215 *et seq.*, 226, 238.
Employers—110,114, 218, 277, 394.

Equality of opportunity—182, 325.
Evolution—57 *et seq* (see Progress, conditions of).
Exchange advantage to mankind—64, 65, 252.

Family—87 *et seq*, 98, 157.
Fawcett, Henry—312.
Fertility of land—22, 23.
Fraud and force—366 *et seq*.
Freedom involves access to land—52 *et seq*.
French Revolution—240, 319 *et seq*, 335.

Gain, love of—12 *et seq*, 134.
Galileo 291.
George, Henry—44, 316, 317, 318, 330, 331.
Giraffe—176 (note).
Gladstone, W. E.—281.
Gold Mines—243 *et seq*.
Government, Excess and abuse of—189 *et seq*, 299 *et seq*, 336, 339 *et seq*, 358, 365 *et seq*.
Gravitation, Law of—84, 136.
Greatest good of greatest number—124 *et seq*, 326.
Greeks—67, 68, 157.
Growth of institutions—1, 2, 373 *et seq*.

Happiness—120, 131, 132, 147, *et seq*, 326.
Hallucinations—394, 398.
Hatred—401 *et seq*.
Hebrews, epistle to—167.
Housing—32, 33, 254 *et seq*, 389 *et seq*.
Humanism—163 *et seq*.
Humanitarianism—124 *et seq*.
Hut Tax—243 *et seq*.
Huxley on Positivism—164.

Income tax—255 *et seq*.
India—43, 117.
Individual motives and rights —37, 83, 86, 154.
Inferior races—243 *et seq*, 326.
Insects, social—57 *et seq*.
Inspection—343, 344.
Interest on capital—227, 362, 363.
Inventors—380.
Irish land stock—392, 393.

Japanese—167, 187 *et seq*.
Jesuit of Labour—376, 387.
Jevons, W. Stanley—12, 294, 355.
Jews—68 *et seq*.
Job—195.
Jurisprudence—4, 5, 154.
Justice, natural—52, 155 *et seq*.

Kidd, Benjamin—57, 129, 130.
Knowledge as producer—215, 352, 360 *et seq*.

Labour—215 *et seq*, 283 *et seq*, 360 *et seq*.
Labour (capital L)—216 *et seq*, 322, 375.
Labour, free forced and fettered —25, 239 *et seq*, 288.
Lancashire—43.
Land as producer—34, 234, 363.
Land modes of holding—35, 337 *et seq*.
Land Taxation—34, 50 *et seq*, 118, 175.
Land, Value of—22 *et seq* to 56.
Landlordism—29, 50, 252, 330 *et seq*.
Lawyers—351, 352.
Laws, economic and natural —2 *et seq*, 21.
Layard—66.
Liberalism—289, 323.
Liberty—48, 70 *et seq*, 121 *et seq*, 177 *et seq*, 207 *et seq*, 225 *et seq*, 239 *et seq*, 273 *et seq*, 323 *et seq*.
Life Ultra rational—135 *et seq*, 152.
Life's vigour and pressure—95, 100 *et seq*, 143, 192 *et seq*.

Lincolnshire—44.
Logic—355 *et seq.*
London—37, 45.
Love as motive—134.
Luther, Martin—208.
Luxury and poverty—314,315, 329, 334, 349.

Macaulay, Lord, on Machiavelli—68 (note).
Majority rule—122 *et seq.*
Management, cost of public 364.
Manchester—37.
Margin of cultivation—23, 24, 39, 44, 45, 46, 333.
Mark Twain—173 (note).
Marriage rate—105, 108 *et seq.*, 114.
Martyrdom—72 *et seq.*, 140.
Marx Karl—222, 317, 336.
Material needs—7 *et seq.*, 34, 138, 139.
Medicine man—373, 374, 378
Middle Classes—114.
Middleman—334.
Mill, John Stuart—43, 311.
Minimum price—218 *et seq.*, 328, 344.
Missions—375, 376, 388.
Money—134, 135, 309, 313, 377, 381.
Motor Cars—314.
Mumbo Jumbo—164.

Napoleon—159, 195.
National decay—66 *et seq.*, 140.
Nobleman and boy—8.

Parentage—90 *et seq.*, 98, 111 *et seq.*, 121, 206.
Parliament—3, 6, 24, 35, 229, 273, 279, 280, 289, 292, 375.
Past and present—319, 320, 336, 337.
Patriotism—158 *et seq.*
Payment of members—213, 279, *et seq.*
Peaceful persuasion—267 *et seq.*, 289.
Pensions—347, 348.
Petty, Sir William—215.
Pinmaking—183 *et seq.*
Poll tax—243 *et seq.*
Population, restriction of—143 *et seq.*
Pragmatism—323, 324.
Prices—173 *et seq.*, 303 *et seq.*, 309, 313.
Priestcraft—293, 341, 342, 365 *et seq.*
Production—11, 20, 30, 46, 47, 50, 64, 97, 139, 325, 330, 332, 339, 399.
Progress, conditions of—47-8, 81, 92 *et seq.*, 103, 128, 129 *et seq.*, 142 *et seq.*, 171 *et seq.*, 373.
Protection—5, 173-4, 250 *et seq.*, 293.
Protection and trades unionism—276 *et seq.*
Public debt—119, 263-4, 301 348, 349, 363, 392, 400.
Public parks, streets, etc., —301 *et seq.*
Puritans—372, 379.

Race decay—66 *et seq.*, 140.
Rainmaker—373, 377.
Reason (and religion)—129, 133 *et seq.*, 141, 150 *et seq.*, 200 *et seq.*
Religion (see Reason and Religion)—166, 371, *et seq.*, 378, 401.
Rent economic—21 *et seq.*, 42, 226-7, 331 *et seq.*
Ricardo, David—25.
Robespierre—164.
Rome—67, 69, 71, 157.
Ruskin, John—144.
Russia—43.
Russo-Japanese War — 167, 187 *et seq.*

Sacrifice—72 *et seq.*, 129 *et seq.*, 140, 150, 193.
Savonarola—208.

Science (identity amidst diversity)—171, 355.
Scotland—37.
Selection of Commanders—185 *et seq.*
Self-preservation—147, 148.
Slavery—248.
Small holdings—163, 388, 389.
Smiles Self Help—385, 386.
Smith, Adam—11, 12, 13, 175, 214, 332, 360, 361.
Socialism—163, 205, 257 *et seq.* 356 *et seq.*
Social efficiency—57, 66, 74, 77, 82 *et seq*, 111, 127, 148, 183.
Social schemes—3, 307, 323, 359.
Social science and problems interdependent—352, 353, 354.
Society, meaning of—78, 89 *et seq*, 113.
Solicitor-General—351 *et seq.*
Solidarity of labour—404.
South Africa—229.
Speculative building—391.
Spencer, Herbert—47.
Spending *v.* Working—297 (see Consumers and Production)
Spirits, invocation to—167.
Spiritual life—152, 170.
Standard of Comfort—46, 299 *et seq*, 325.
Statecraft—324.
State Railways—189.
Statistics—105, 106, 114, 115.
St. Ive's Workhouse—320-1, 335.
Stock Exchange—13, 14.
Struggle for existence—94, 95, 100 *et seq*, 129 *et seq*, 177 *et seq.*
Subsidies—298, 304.
Subsistence, Wages of—107.
Suicide—9, 10, 148 *et seq.*
Sun Worship—374
Surplus—64-5, 173 *et seq*, 328, 361 *et seq*, 382 *et seq*, 403.
Taxes on industry and occupation—28 *et seq*, 39, 47 *et seq*, 65, 119, 254, 260, 341, 344, 399.
Taxes on ownership of land 27 *et seq*, 37 *et seq*, 47, 50 *et seq*, 175, 260.
Testament, New—167, 210, 384.
Thought (wonder at)—137.
Thunder (sublimity of)—137.
Title to land—26, 50.
Trades Unions—100, 101, 110, 218, *et seq.* and protection 264 *et seq* (beneficial 275).
Tragedies—9, 10.
Trusts—49, 399.

Unemployed—111, 145 (note), 198, 219 *et seq*, 231, 296 *et seq*, 353.
Underconsumption—299, 308 310.
Unit of Society—88.
Universities—269, 290, 346.

Variation—47, 182 *et seq*, 316 318, 373.

Wages Standard—218 *et seq*, 238, 328, 344.
Walker, Prof. F. A.—100, 225-6.
War (effect on trade)—300 *et seq.*
Wesley, John—208.
Western Civilisation—130, 200.
Work not injurious to others —275 *et seq*, 283 *et seq.*
Work (wanted)—18, 19, right to—270 *et seq.*
Workmen's Compensation — 346-347.
Worship ancestors, etc.—374. Devil worship—377.

Yeoman, English—387.
Young, Arthur—320, 321, 335.

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